

LAYS OF THE GOSPEL.

THE END OF THE WORLD

101

L A Y S

OF

THE GOSPEL.

BY

Stephen Greenleaf
S. G. BULFINCH.

“Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.” — JOHN xv. 4.



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P R E F A C E .

THIS book was at first undertaken as an enlarged edition of a small work which I published several years since, under the title, "Contemplations of the Saviour." In the course of execution, however, the plan has been gradually changed ; and in this volume, nothing remains of the former one, but a partial resemblance in the arrangement of the scriptural subjects, and a few of the original pieces, mostly in an altered form.

The idea I have had in view, was to present such a series of illustrations, as might assist devout feeling, in the reading of the Saviour's history. With this object I have divided the Gospel history into one hundred sections, following generally the arrangement of Drs. Carpenter and Palfrey. Each section is designated by reference to the chapter from which it is taken, and to its first and last verses ; and from each of these portions of scripture some passage is selected which seemed suitable for poetical development. In arranging the sections, I have endeavored, while avoiding repetition, to guard against omitting any passage of much comparative importance. In one respect a departure from the order of the Harmony seemed advisable ; the facts and discourses which are there placed together at the end, as " of uncertain date," being here brought into the course of the narrative, in the places indicated by their position in the gospel of St. Luke.

The difficulty of the undertaking will, perhaps, in some degree excuse the imperfections of its performance. The

subjects I was to illustrate are those which have been for ages the themes of comment among Christians, from the pulpit and the press; while many of them, in their sublime simplicity, neither need nor can receive adornment. What can be added, in beauty or in tenderness, to the parable of the Prodigal Son? In treating such a subject, all to which I could aspire was to repeat the words of the Saviour in as simple verse as possible, so as not to obscure and deform what I could not beautify.

The view given, in the verses numbered xxvii, of the feelings of our Lord's hearers on the Mount, is not only not original with me, but was expressed in a poetical form by another writer, some years since, in the *Christian Disciple* or *Christian Examiner*. I am not aware that there is any other instance in which the ideas of another have been used, in such a manner as to render it suitable to state the fact.

I have freely availed myself of the common poetical privilege of apostrophe, in direct address to the Saviour; and have used such language with regard to demoniacs, the personal return of Christ to judge the earth, and similar subjects, as was authorized by the usage of the New Testament, without feeling bound to the literal construction of that language.

Whatever may be the estimate formed of the poetical merit of this volume, the hope is entertained that it may be useful to those who read it for the purpose of religious improvement. Should these pages present to any a new attraction to the study of the Saviour's life and character, should they be instrumental in giving an impulse to Christian benevolence, or to pure devotion in any heart, the labor of their preparation will not have been in vain.

S. G. B.

Nov. 30, 1844.

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TO * * * * *

DEAR Friend, whose merit shuns the public gaze,
I will not on my page inscribe thy name,
Nor that high worth with idle zeal proclaim
That wins, from those who know thee, better praise
Than theirs, for whom the crowd their voices raise.
For thou hast lived for others ; thou hast found
Thyself most blest, when all were blest around.
Hence beamed a light upon thy darkest days,
Beyond the power of chance ; for thou hast been
Circled with friends, while the true soul within
Bore witness to thee from the realm above.
Peace be around thy path, while those most dear,
Whose venerable age 't was thine to cheer,
Look down upon thee with unchanging love !

LAYS OF THE GOSPEL.

I.

THE INCARNATION OF THE WORD.

JOHN I. 1-18.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God,
and the Word was God. — Verse 1.

And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us. — Verse 14.

CREATIVE Wisdom ! God's almighty Word !

For ages with the Infinite alone

Thou wast, ere nature's morning hymn was heard,
Partaker of his everlasting throne.*

And thou wast with him, when he spread the skies,

When ocean at his will first ebb'd and flow'd,

When first above the vales of Paradise

The gold and crimson of the sunset glow'd.

Ages had pass'd ; the world in silence lay,

As conscious of the time by seers foretold ;

Then didst thou, Intellect's transcendent ray !

Thy glory in a human form enfold.

* Proverbs viii. 22, 27, 30.

Saviour ! Incarnate Wisdom of the Lord !

How bright in thee the Father's image glows !
Thy holy influence o'er our souls be poured,
For strength in conflict, rapture in repose.

O thou, from forth whose armory divine
The heavenly glories of the Saviour came !
I bring an humble offering to thy shrine,
Sacred to thee, in thy Messiah's name.

Unworthy is the gift ; but if aright
To thee 't is proffered, thou wilt not despise ;
And thou canst grant the spirit of thy might,
That every faithful effort sanctifies.

May it be blest, in suffering to console,
To make the Saviour's love and glory known,
To burst the chains of passion's base control,
And lead the penitent to mercy's throne.

II.

THE VISION OF ZACHARIAS.

LUKE I. 1-23.

And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias. —
Verse 17.

THE spirit of Elijah !
That spirit stern and bold,
In which the mighty Man of God,
Stood in the days of old,
When with four hundred enemies *
He met in strife alone,
And bowed the heart of Israel
Before Jehovah's throne.

The spirit of Elijah !
Again it came on earth,
With him who by an angel's voice
Was named before his birth.
Taunting the guilt-stained Pharisees,
He stood with fearless mien ;
He dared denounce a monarch's crime,
And brave a vengeful queen.

* 1 Kings xviii. 22.

That spirit pure and holy
Filled Luther's soul with might,
When singly, with the world opposed,
He battled for the right.
The assembled princes of the land *
A higher power confessed,
In the Reformer's burning words,
And his undaunted breast.

The spirit of Elijah!
O Lord! we need it still.
Send thou that glorious spirit down
To conquer wrong and ill!
To curb the arm of violence,
To tear the mask from fraud,
And cause our renovated land
To hear the voice of God!

* At the Diet of Worms.

III.

THE ANNUNCIATION.

LUKE I. 26 - 56.

Hail, thou that art highly favored ; the Lord is with thee : blessed art thou among women. — Verse 28.

ONCE o'er the world's wide regions spread
The darkness of despair ;
No ray from human wisdom shed
Had power to enter there.
Brightly the light of Grecian lore
Had flashed in ages gone,
But now, that early promise o'er,
All dim and cold it shone.
And where, in virtue's strength sublime
The Roman power had stood,
Now, stained with each detested crime,
Usurping rivals sought to climb
To thrones upreared in blood.

Where was earth's hope in that dark hour
When the last Brutus fell ?
A villain tool of foreign power
Held sway o'er Israel.

From Herod's court, from Cæsar's throne,
The sophist's learned maze,
No ray of dawning virtue shone
With hope of better days.
Then, Judah's humble village maid !
The word was sent to thee ;
The promise of a Saviour's aid,
To raise the world, in darkness laid,
To light, to liberty.

O ye, who with despairing eyes,
The blighted prospect trace,
Doubtful if hope can yet arise
For your corrupted race !
Fear not ! within some shady nook
There bursts a fountain pure,
And soon its clear and healthful brook
Shall flow to soothe and cure.
Though long the cruel and the proud
Insult his guardian power,
Though long his purpose he may shroud
Beneath a dark mysterious cloud,
God waits his chosen hour.

And ye, who in presumptuous might
Feel that to you is given
The power to make earth's darkness light,
And work the will of Heaven ;
Boast not ; almighty energy
Can spare your haughty aid :

Can make a world from bondage free
By a poor village maid.
Then humbly to the work divine
Your costly tribute bring;
And He before whose awful shrine
Ye meekly bow, will not decline
His servants' offering.



IV.

BIRTH OF JOHN THE BAPTIST.

LUKE I. 57-80.

The day-spring from on high. — Verse 78.

TOILING through the livelong night,
Faint, uncertain of his way,
How the traveller hails the light,
Herald of the coming day.

Thus, when fraud and rapine threw
O'er the world their cloud afar,
On the good man's raptured view
Broke the dawn of Judah's star.

Tears of joy and gratitude
Hailed the Baptist's natal morn,
For the heavenly light renewed,
For another prophet born.

Born to go before the face
Of Judea's Saviour King;
Tidings of celestial grace
To the mourning land to bring.

Thus began the song of praise
For the day-spring's earliest ray.
How should we the anthem raise,
For the Gospel's perfect day!

V.

BIRTH OF JESUS.

LUKE II. 1-21.

Glory to God in the highest ; and on earth peace, good will towards men. — Verse 14.

GLORY to God !

The Lord, the righteous hath looked down from heaven,
And great salvation to his people given.

Glory to God !

Peace on the earth !

Now let the sons of men in harmony
Accept the blessing sent by God on high.

Peace on the earth !

Good will to men !

For God, the merciful, his Son hath sent
To bid the sinner's stubborn heart relent.

Good will to men !

Messiah comes !

Now is the appointed time of prophecy.
Israel, rejoice ! deliverance draweth nigh.

Messiah comes !

Hail, Prince of Peace!
 Hail, Virgin Mother! on thy blameless breast
 The Hope of nations takes his smiling rest.
 Hail, Prince of Peace!

 VI.

PRESENTATION OF JESUS IN THE TEMPLE.

LUKE II. 22-38.

Lord! now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation. — Verses 29, 30.

HOLY and happy age!
 Declining to the grave, thy heart reposes
 On the sure promise of the sacred page,
 And with its brightest beam, thy daylight closes.

Loved saint, depart in peace!
 Long hast thou borne the burthen and the strife;
 Death is to thee from care a sweet release,
 And the blest summons to eternal life.

No doubt disturbs thy joy.
 One who so well hath labored through the day,
 Now that the evening comes, no fears annoy,
 But glad he turns him from his toils away.

We watch thy spirit's flight,
Then cheerful to the scenes of life return;
For thy departing words have made them bright,
And zeal, and faith, and love, within us burn.

On thee was much bestowed;
To clasp the infant Saviour to thy breast;
But we can hear the words of love that flowed
From Jesus' lips when thou hadst sunk to rest.

Oh, when the hour draws nigh
That calls us hence, may we like thee impart
Hope to survivors, and without a sigh
Rise to the mansions of the pure in heart!

VII.

THE WISE MEN FROM THE EAST.

MATTHEW, CHAP. II.

Behold, there came wise men from the East to Jerusalem. —
Verse 1.

HAIL to thee, hoary Wisdom! age on age
Hath seen thine empire o'er the great and good.
Through thee the Chaldee read the starry page;
To thee old Egypt bowed beside her flood.
Where Persia's sons the might of kings subdued,
Where Indian bards their wild traditions tell,
Thy chosen ones have taught, thine altars stood;
And truth's enthusiasts ay have loved to dwell
Where from the sage's lips the words of wonder fell.

But chief, O land of eloquence and song!
Fair Greece, in thee Philosophy was seen,
With Socrates, amid the Athenian throng,
With Plato, by Ilissus' banks of green,
With Zeno's voice of power, and lofty mien;
Thence westward passing to the conquerors' home,
With Cicero she gazed upon the scene,
Of arch triumphal, portico and dome,
Where towered, supreme in pomp, thy pride, imperial
Rome!

'Then rose a holier teacher. From the clime
Where Wisdom won her earliest victories;
Her children came, led on their quest sublime
By that mysterious herald in the skies,
Messiah's star; behold its radiance lies
Upon the manger's roof; they enter there;
Before an infant bend the old and wise,
And gazing on his peaceful features fair,
To God on high they raise the tributary prayer.

This was Philosophy's first offering given
To him who came in infant purity,
To speak to man the high commands of Heaven.
Oh ever thus in sweet humility
May Wisdom kneel, receiving thankfully
The blessings of thy doctrine, Prince of Peace!
And vail her ancient honors unto thee,
Hailing the light that bids her own decrease,
Since that celestial ray hath made the darkness cease.

VIII.

CHRIST'S VISIT TO THE TEMPLE, WHEN A CHILD.

LUKE II. 40 - 52.

They found him in the Temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors.
And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was
subject unto them. — Verses 46, 51.

SOFT is the rounded cheek of youth,
Bright is its lip of ruddy dye,
And innocence and open truth
Beam beauteous from the speaking eye.
That eye, how quick its flash of mirth !
Or if the boy hath paused to hear
Some tale of woe, of injured worth,
How ready bursts the generous tear !

Oh to the altar of the Lord
That bright and willing votary lead ;
And let him from the holy word
This record of his Saviour read ;
How when a boy, he loved the place
Made sacred to the name of God,
And, rich in heaven's peculiar grace,
Yet meek in filial duty trod.

Young Christian! like thy Saviour hear!
 Young Christian! like thy Saviour pray!
 Still own thy heavenly Father near;
 Thine earthly parents' rule obey.
 Be thy first fruits of duty laid
 Before thy God, in faith and love;
 And He thy course on earth will aid,
 And lead thee to His home above.

 IX.

BAPTISM OF JESUS.

MATTHEW III.

And lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him. — Verse 16.

OF old by Carmel's altar stone
 The prophet of the Lord,
 Amid the silent tribes alone,
 His supplication poured.*

Then from the heavens without a cloud
 Was sent the answering flame;
 The awe-struck tribes repentant bowed,
 And owned Jehovah's name.

* 1 Kings, xviii.

Long ages passed. The Baptist stood
By Jordan's silver stream,
When o'er the consecrating flood
Appeared a radiant gleam.

Dove-like the glory slow descends
On Jesus' head to rest ;
The conscious prophet lowly bends ;
Messiah stands confessed.

Thou who didst bid the altar flame
From Carmel's height aspire ;
From whom to Jesus' brow there came
The emblematic fire !

On our heart-altars, cold and dark,
Thy kindling radiance send ;
And with thy dove-like spirit mark
Thy children to the end.

X.

THE TEMPTATION IN THE WILDERNESS.

MATTHEW IV. 1 – 11.

It is written, thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. — Verse 10.

WHEN a thousand voices raise
To thy name the shout of praise,
And before thy dazzled sight
Glory beams enthroned in light,
While on thee she calls aloud,
Pointing to the admiring crowd,
Pause, nor kneel before her throne ;
Give thy heart to God alone !

Sweeter strains of soft desire
Swell from Pleasure's golden lyre.
Bright as beams of opening day
Hope and Transport round her play ;
Smiles and gayety are there,
Banished far are Thought and Care.
Heed not thou the entrancing tone,
Give thy heart to God alone !

Mammon bids thee view the store
Heaped for him from every shore.
Worship him, and wealth untold,
Through thy swelling coffers rolled,
Shall reward thy bended knee. —
Spurn the base idolatry!
Heavenly treasures are thine own;
Give thy heart to God alone!

Onward, in thy Saviour's path,
Brave the baffled Tempter's wrath.
Soon deceitful Pleasure's lay
From thine ear shall pass away;
Soon Ambition's thrilling voice
Cease to urge thy trembling choice.
Life's short day of duty done,
Thou shalt joy in God alone.

XI.

CONVERSATION OF JESUS WITH NATHANAEL.

JOHN I. 35 - 51.

Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man. — Verse 51.

EXILED from home, and worn with care,
 As the young Hebrew slept,*
 Before him rose the mystic stair,
 Their watch while angels kept,
 And in his vision, from on high,
 On holy errands came,
 Or upward to their native sky
 Arose like flashing flame.

Thus, Saviour! though thy pathway led
 Amid insulting foes,
 Without a place to lay thy head,
 For thee a vision rose;
 Spirits of grace, still hovering near,
 Sent by the Almighty Lord,
 To comfort on thy path of fear,
 Or execute thy word.

* Genesis xxviii. 11.

And even with us, the attentive eye
Sometimes the marks can trace,
Of that celestial company,
God's messengers of grace.
When mercy spares the perilled life,
We feel that they are near,
And conquering in virtue's strife,
Their lay of triumph hear.

Sweet thought ! yet is the thought less dear,
That Thou, and Thou alone,
In trial's hour art ever near,
Eternal, boundless One ?
We seek not, Lord, to penetrate
The mysteries of thy will ;
Enough for this our lowly state
To own thy goodness still.

XII.

MARRIAGE.

JOHN II.

There was a marriage in Cana of Galilee ; and the mother of Jesus was there. And both Jesus was called, and his disciples, to the marriage. — Verses 1, 2.

THEY stand amid their earnest friends, joyful yet awed
and still,

As priestly hands the rite of old by God ordained fulfil;
The few and simple words they breathe, though scarce
they meet the ear,

Pledge heart to heart, and life to life, through many a
coming year.

As meet their hands with tender grasp, each heart re-
nounces there

Whatever thought of earthly bliss the other may not
share.

Henceforth together do they pass, in joy and sorrow
one,

Nor that mysterious union ends, till life itself be done.

And now with blushes and with smiles, the young
bride meets her friends;

With voice of trembling earnestness, a father o'er her
bends,

A sister's tear is on her cheek, a mother's heart o'er-
flows,
As hope and fear their visions to her anxious eyes
disclose.

With lightsome word and glance of mirth, the youth
whom love has crowned,
Grasps now the proffered hands of those who gaily
throng around ;
But in his heart a voice is heard of pure resolve and
high,
As some majestic organ-strain through sounds of rev-
elry.

That trusting one whose deepest love is yielded to his
claim,
Who now by smiling friends addressed, first hears her
matron name ;
To her he vows himself anew, before that secret shrine,
Where Conscience to the heart reveals the majesty di-
vine.

Blest Saviour ! though no bridal wreath entwined thy
awful brow,
Not void of sympathy for aught of blameless joy wast
thou ;
And walking in thy Gospel's light, thy true disciples
prove
The purity of wedded bliss, the holiness of love.

XIII.

CONVERSATION WITH NICODEMUS.

JOHN III. 1-21.

Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.—
Verse 3.

Our life is but a span,
And full of fears and woes,
In tears our earthly course began,
In tears that course must close.

But, Lord! through thee we own
A new and heavenly birth,
Kindred to spirits round thy throne,
Though sojourners of earth.

How glorious is the hour
When first our souls awake,
Through thy mysterious Spirit's power,
And of new life partake.

With richer beauty glows
The world, before so fair;
Her holy light Religion throws,
Reflected everywhere.

Amid repentant tears
We feel sweet peace within ;
We know the God of mercy hears,
And pardons every sin.

The life that thou hast given,
O Lord ! shall never end ;
The grave is but the path to heaven,
And Death is now our friend.

Born of thy Spirit, Lord !
Thy spirit may we share ;
Deep in our hearts inscribe thy word,
And place thine image there,

Teach us to walk aright
On earth, as serving thee ;
Then take us to thy realms of light,
Thine to eternity.

XIV.

ALL THINGS FROM GOD.

PIETY OF JOHN THE BAPTIST.

JOHN III. 22'-36.

John answered and said, A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven. — Verse 27.

CHILD of wealth, whose mansion shines
With the spoils of Indian mines,
While around, a numerous band
Prompt to serve thee, ever stand;
For thy lip the banquet glows,
And the purple vintage flows.
Beauty lines thy sculptured hall,
Beams upon the pictured wall.
Earth and air and sea supply
Every gift of luxury.
Yet, amid thy pleasures, own,
Humbly, at thy Maker's throne,
Nought is thine but what is given
By the God who reigns in heaven.

Child of genius! unto thee
Is the world of fancy free.

Thou canst call, with magic power,
Joy from field, and stream and flower.
When thou speakest, crowds are listening,
Tears in every eye are glistening.
Heart-struck thousands breathe thy name,
Child of genius, heir of fame !
Age on age shall roll away
Ere that fame shall know decay.
At thy Maker's shrine lay down,
Humbly lay, thy laurel crown.
Nought is thine but what is given
By the God who reigns in heaven.

Thou who in a quiet spot
Hold'st thine own contented lot,
Neither wealth nor fame is thine,
But true hearts about thee twine,
With affection's answering smile,
Childhood's fond, endearing wile.
Thine is labor, sweetening rest,
Still of health and peace possessed,
Happier in thy lowly sphere
Than the great whom millions fear,
Than the bard whom all admire,
Martyr to his own wild fire ;
Praise thy God for blessings given
By His grace who reigns in heaven.

Thou, who desolate and lone,
Mournest over blessings flown,

In thine anguish bending o'er
Him who ne'er shall waken more
Till the last dread trump shall ring,
While thine orphans round thee cling!
Poverty thy chilled heart presses,
Every look thy woe confesses.
Tearful one! lift up thine eyes
To the world beyond the skies.
There are joys more rich than all
Blooming on this earthly ball.
Praise thy God, whose pledge is given,
Brightening earth with hopes of heaven.

XV.

THE SABBATH DAY.

MATTHEW XII. 1 - 21.

I will have mercy, and not sacrifice. — Verse 7.

HAIL to the Sabbath day!
The day divinely given,
When men to God their homage pay,
And earth draws near to heaven.

Lord, in thy sacred hour,
Within thy courts we bend,
And bless thy love, and own thy power,
Our Father and our Friend!

But thou art not alone,
In courts by mortals trod,
Nor only is the day thine own,
When crowds adore their God.

Nor time nor space can bound
Thy universal might;
And every spot is hallowed ground
To those who pray aright.

Thy Temple is the arch
Of yon unmeasured sky,
Thy Sabbath, the stupendous march
Of grand eternity.

Then let not bigot pride
The form alone revere ;
Still be our sabbaths sanctified,
But more by love than fear.

The sacrifice of prayer
Before thy shrine we bring ;
Help us a worthier gift to bear
In mercy's offering.

Lord ! may a holier day
Dawn on thy servants' sight ;
And grant us in thy courts to pray,
Of pure, unclouded light !

XVI.

SPIRITUAL WORSHIP.

JOHN IV. 1-42.

God is a spirit, and they that worship him, must worship him in spirit and in truth. — Verse 24.

How should the Christian seek his God ?
Where columned arches proudly sweep,
Whose aisles by thousands have been trod,
Now resting in a dreamless sleep ?
Or shall he best his Sabbaths keep
In still communion with his soul,
Where the calm Friends, in silence deep,
Await the Spirit's blest control ?

Choose for thyself. But if thy feet
Should wander where thy brethren pray,
Who round another altar meet,
And varied forms of homage pay,
Blame not their rite as vain display ;
If simple, hold it not in scorn,
For heard alike of Heaven are they
Whose worship of the heart is born.

For thee, perchance, in yon gray pile,
 Beneath whose floor the dead repose,
As ceased the pastor's word the while,
 Thy young voice tremulously rose,
Responsive at the frequent close,
 While hundreds joined the solemn word;
And still the scene as memory shows,
 The feelings of the boy are stirred.

But in yon humble place of prayer,
 Where simplest forms our faith express,
Canst thou not feel that God is there,
 Or own his awful goodness less?
His presence fills with holiness
 The lowliest as the loftiest fane,
And his accepting love shall bless
 The whispered prayer, the anthem's strain.

XVII.

THE NOBLEMAN OF CAPERNAUM.

JOHN IV. 43 - 54.

Then said Jesus unto him, except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe. The nobleman saith unto him, Sir, come down ere my child die. — Verses 48, 49.

“Not for a test of thy celestial power,
Prophet of God! I ask the wondrous sign;
But ah! revive my bosom’s drooping flower,
Ere my child die, exert thy might divine.”

Oh thus how many a humbled heart hath sought
In meekness for the grace of Him on high;
No questionings of cold, proud reason brought,
But only pleaded, Come, or else we die!

How many a mother for her erring child
Hath claimed the aid of Him who heareth prayer;
How many a heart, for years unreconciled,
At length hath sought his saving grace to share!

The eye of God each suppliant surveys,
And ne’er was such petition breathed in vain.
Though for a time mysterious are his ways,
Our burthen shall grow light, our duty plain.

The rays of joy shall beam through sorrow's night,
Or strength be given to toil amid the gloom ;
Till the full triumph of his love and might
Shall beam when we have passed the conquered
tomb.



XVIII.

MIRACLE AT THE POOL OF BETHESDA.

JOHN V. 1-15.

Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed and walk. — Verse 8.

THE aged sufferer waited long
Upon Bethesda's brink,
Till hopes, once rising warm and strong,
Began in fears to sink.
And heavy were the sighs he drew,
And fervent was his prayer ;
For he, with safety full in view,
Still languished helpless there.

His hope grew dim ; but one was nigh
Who saw the sufferer's grief.
That gentle voice, that pitying eye,
Gave promise of relief.

Each pang that human weakness knows,
Obeyed that powerful word;
He spake, and lo ! the sick arose,
Rejoicing in his Lord.

Father of Jesus ! when oppressed
With grief and pain we lie,
And, longing for thy heavenly rest,
Despair to look so high,
Oh may the Saviour's words of peace,
Within the wounded heart,
Bid every doubt and suffering cease,
And strength and joy impart.

XIX.

THE TESTIMONY OF MIRACLES.

JOHN V. 16-47.

The works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me. — Verse 36.

HOLY Son of God most high,
Clothed in heavenly majesty!
Many a miracle and sign,
In thy Father's name divine,
Manifested forth thy might,
In the chosen people's sight.

But, O Saviour! not alone,
Thus thy glory was made known.
Kindly human wants relieving,
Gently with the mourner grieving,
Far thy matchless power above,
Stands the witness of thy love.

Thou who by the open grave,
Ere thy voice was raised to save,
Didst with those fond sisters shed
Tears above the faithful dead;
Even thy word of might appears
Less resistless than thy tears.

When upon the fatal tree
Thou didst writhe in agony,
Had that pain in triumph ended,
Hadst thou royally ascended,
Less sublime had been thy power,
Than thy patience shone that hour.

Lord! it is not ours to gaze
On thy works of ancient days;
But thy love, unchanged and bright,
More than all those works of might,
More than miracle and sign,
Makes us ever, ever thine.

XX.

JESUS AT THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES.

JOHN VII.

In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink. — Verse 37.

Then came the officers to the chief priests and Pharisees. And they said unto them, Why have ye not brought him? The officers answered, Never man spake like this man. — Verses 45, 46.

IN all the pomp of the glorious East,
Rose the last great day of Judea's feast.
The sun was flashing on mount and plain,
But brightest on that majestic fane,
Where Herod had lavished his wealth and power
On court and piazza and airy tower.
Widely around the city lay
The festal booths in their bright array;
On street and square and roof were seen
Thousands of tents of foliage green;
The vine, the fir, and the cedar gave
Their branches in that high feast to wave,
In memory of Jehovah's grace
When the tent was Israel's dwelling place.

But when the sun o'er Olivet's crown
Glanced to the vale of Kedron down,
Jerusalem sent her sons abroad
To the spacious courts of the house of God.

The altar's smoke o'er the Temple hung,
And the lays of the prophet-king were sung,
While adoring Judah bent the knee
In that dread home of the Deity.

Soon a band of priests, from Siloa's fount,
Brought the cool, pure wave to the sacred mount,
And with shout and psalm the tribute poured
Beside the altar of the Lord.

Then rose that voice, which still and clear,
Yet breathes at times on the mental ear,
But the full rich sound of whose awful tone
Was granted to that far age alone.

"If any man thirst, let him come to me;
He shall drink of the wave of eternity."
And a murmur spread through the crowd around,
"The prophet, the Christ of God is found!"

They gathered with looks of wonder and awe,
While he spake of God's most holy law.
He taught with a mien as void of fear
As if he knew not his foes were near.
There were dark stern faces amid the throng,
Their hearts were fierce, and their hands were strong;
But it was not yet their destined hour,
And they felt controlled by a higher power,
In the Teacher's calm, majestic eye,
In his words of truth and piety.

Back to their haughty lords they came,
Guarding no captive, with looks of shame.
"Why have ye thus our commandment broken?"
"Never man spake as this man hath spoken!"

XXI.

MERCIFUL TREATMENT OF OFFENDERS.

JOHN VIII. 1 - 29.

Go, and sin no more. — Verse 11.

BENIGNANT Saviour ! 't was not thine
 To spurn the erring from thy sight,
 Nor did thy smile of love divine
 Turn from the penitent its light.

Oh then, shall we, who own thy name,
 A brother's fault too sternly view,
 Or think thy holy law can blame
 The tear to sin's deep suffering due ?

May we, while human guilt awakes
 Upon our cheek the indignant glow,
 Yet spare the offender's heart, that breaks
 Beneath its load of shame and woe.

Conscious of frailty, may we bend
 In pity to affliction's prayer,
 And strive the suppliant to defend
 From further sin, or dark despair.

And when our own offences weigh
Upon our hearts with anguish sore,
Lord ! let thy sparing mercy say,
Like Jesus, " Go, and sin no more."



XXII.

TRUE FREEDOM.

JOHN VIII. 30-59.

Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. —
Verse 32.

Who is the truly free ?
Ambition's chosen son ?
The chief adorned with victory,
The monarch on his throne ?

No ! Passion's force can shake
The soul in danger tried,
And he who bars of steel can break,
May be the slave of pride.

Who is the truly blest ?
The man of wealth untold,
In robes of Eastern splendor dressed,
And served in plate of gold ?

No! vain his rich attire
To ease the laboring breath;
Nor streams of gold can quench the fire,
The fever-flame of death.

That man is free, O Lord!
To whom thy name is dear,
Who fearing thee, performs thy word,
And knows no other fear.

From passion, pride, remorse,
Thy care his path shall guard,
And lead him on, in virtue's course
To his divine reward.

Thy love protects his way;
To thee his thoughts are given;
Thy smile shall gild life's evening ray,
And light the morn of heaven.

XXIII.

CURE OF A BLIND MAN.

JOHN IX.

I must work the works of Him that sent me, while it is day ; the night cometh, when no man can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world. — Verses 4, 5.

LIGHT of the world ! Redeemer blest !
Thou didst not hide in slothful rest
 The power that God had given.
Well was performed the task he gave,
Ere from the darkness of the grave
 Thy form arose to heaven.

What was that task ? On eyes whose power
Had slumbered from the natal hour
 To pour the light of day,
And o'er the more unhappy blind
Of heart perverse and clouded mind
 Exert thy healing sway.

Saviour ! like thee thy followers find
A portion of God's work assigned ;
 And, ere our day shall close,
That sacred task may we fulfil,
Then calmly meet our Father's will,
 And sink to blest repose.

The night, when none can work, draws nigh;
Then ere these hastening moments fly,
 Let us their tribute bear,
On misery's darkness pour the light,
Irradiate error's mournful night,
 And pierce the cloud of care.

Then not entirely dark shall be
The scene when we resign to thee,
 O God! our earthly trust.
As sinks the sun of life, shall rise
The star of hope, in eastern skies,
 To watch our slumbering dust.

XXIV.

THE GOOD SHEPHERD.

JOHN X.

I am the good shepherd. — Verse 11.

How didst thou lead thy flock, O Lord,
By Siloa's waters still,
And where the arching boughs afford
Shade to the Olive hill !

'T is thine to lead where sweeter streams
Glide by a lovelier bower,
Sheltered from passion's scorching beams,
Safe from temptation's power.

Does not thy holy word dispense,
Like pasture rich and fair,
Fit and delightful sustenance
To those who banquet there ?

No want, O Shepherd ! can we know,
No danger can molest ;
Safe through thy power from every foe,
And in thy plenty blest.

Kind Shepherd! well we know thy voice.
May we of thee be known!
Thy paths of peace our constant choice,
Oh keep us still thine own!



XXV.

JESUS AT NAZARETH.

LUKE IV. 14-31.

And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up.--
Verse 16.

THROUGH many scenes of toil and pain
The holy Teacher passed,
And now his early home again
Before him rose at last.
He saw it; that beloved scene
Could never be forgot;
The hill, the plains of waving green,
His mother's low-roofed cot.

Beneath those trees to meditate
Oft had he held his way,
When on his soul the awful weight
Of his great purpose lay.

There had he turned to gaze upon
The sunset's rosy sky,
And as its glory o'er him shone,
His prayer had risen on high.

Oh ! wounded with the world's keen darts,
How would he rest him there ;
How breathe mid sympathizing hearts
His message and his prayer !
It may not be ; his kindred turn
In pitying scorn away ;
The elders of his village spurn,
The people seek to slay.

O ye who ask, nor ask in vain,
In home a place of rest,
For weary powers and throbbing brain,
By daily cares oppressed,
Remember what He bore who found
No place of sweet repose,
And while with blessings richly crowned
Think on your Saviour's woes.

XXVI.

CALL OF PETER.

LUKE V. 1 - 16.

And Jesus said unto Simon, Fear not ; from henceforth thou shalt catch men. — Verse 10.

THE wind was hushed on Galilee,
As near its waveless flood,
With thought as calm as that fair sea,
A lowly fisher stood.

A voice was heard, as on the lake
Is heard the whispering breeze,
Gentle, yet mighty to awake
The grandeur of the seas.

Years passed away ; the humble man
Who stood unheeding there,
No more at early dawn began
The fisher's tranquil care.

Him, palaces of eastern pride
Now hailed, an honored guest ;
And now, the lowliest couch beside,
He spoke of heavenly rest.

He bore, through perils far and near
His Saviour's holy name ;
He yielded not to hope or fear,
To indolence or shame.

That Saviour's presence cheered his breast
Through every varied scene ;
That faith his dying hour confessed
In martyrdom serene.

Lord ! when engrossed in earth and sense,
Thy glory may we see ;
And may thy gracious influence
Call us to follow thee.

XXVII.

COMMENCEMENT OF THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT.

MATTHEW V. 1-16

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
— Verse 3.

UPON a Syrian mountain's brow
There sat a peasant of the land,
While round him gathered, silent now,
From vale and plain a countless band.
With eager expectation filled,
On his controlling words they hung;
A thousand stormy hearts were stilled,
As rose the accents of his tongue.

From David's old heroic line,
Men said, that peasant prophet rose;
And well they deemed, his voice divine
Would call to vengeance on their foes.
In thought they grasped the bloody sword,
While Rome's dread legions o'er the plain,
Fled from the armies of the Lord,
Or sunk in fight, by thousands slain.

They thought of him in Elah's vale,
 Who brought the heathen giant low,*
 Of armed Assyria's frantic wail,
 At the dark angel's midnight blow.†
 Of Judas, lion of the fight,
 And his bold brethren's deathless name,
 Who tamed the Macedonian might,
 And lit anew the altar's flame.‡

But hark, the prophet! "Blest are they
 The poor in spirit, peaceful, meek,
 Who good for others' ill repay,
 And righteousness and mercy seek.
 Blest are the mourners; blest are those
 Who bleed from persecution's rod;
 For calm in heaven shall they repose;
 The pure in heart shall see their God."

They turn away with mournful brow;
 Their hopes of power and vengeance cease.
 Stern Israel cannot learn to bow
 To thy mild sceptre, Prince of Peace!
 Yet dost thou reign; no earthly throne
 Confines thee to its scanty sway;
 But age on age shall be thine own,
 Earth's thousand tribes thy laws obey.

* 1 Samuel xvii.

† 2 Kings xix. 35.

‡ 1 Maccabees iii. 1; iv. 38.

XXVIII.

RETURNING GOOD FOR EVIL.

MATTHEW V. 17 - 48.

But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you. — Verse 44.

Not by thy lips alone,
Blest Saviour ! was thy law of love declared,
But in thy life of gentleness it shone,
When even thy foes in thy compassion shared.

When on the cross of shame
The bitterness of death thy spirit wrung,
Then from thy lips what words of mercy came,
What gentle pleading melted from thy tongue !

Yet on thy law of love,
In admiration blent with doubt we gaze,
And fear lest human strength too feeble prove
To that majestic height our souls to raise.

But thou hast gone before ;
That height of holiness 't was thine to climb,
And we, the pupils of thy sacred lore,
Can we not emulate thy love sublime ?

And if to thee the strife
Was less, through union with the God of love,
Over our humbler path of common life
Hovers, as over thee, the heavenly dove.

What we must bear below,
How light to all that thou, our Lord, hast borne,
The thorny crown, the scourge, the cross of woe,
And thy relentless foemen's bitter scorn.

Lord! thou canst make us strong!
Control the proud heart; bend the stubborn will;
May we, when injured, meekly bear the wrong,
And make our good victorious over ill!

XXIX.

GOD WHO IS IN SECRET.

MATTHEW VI.

Thy Father which is in secret. — Verse 6.

WHERE is thy dwelling-place, Eternal One ?

In vain we search the illimitable heaven ;
For never yet the brightness of thy throne
Was to the sight of favored mortals given.

The humblest lily of the field displays
Thy bounty, and reveals thy matchless skill ;
But when our thoughts to thee we strive to raise,
The mighty Artist is in secret still.

Within our hearts we know thee ; there are springs
Oft rising, that attest our Father's grace ;
But though we mark the current's wanderings,
Vainly we seek the hidden source to trace.

God, who in secret seest us ! In the hour
Of solitude, do thou thyself reveal.
Led by thy love, and awed before thy power,
Grant us the presence of our God to feel.

A time shall come, when bound no longer here,
Our spirits shall to other scenes ascend.
Then, God of mercy, may we find thee near,
And own the Almighty evermore our friend!



XXX.

CONCLUSION OF THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT.

MATTHEW VII.

Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock. — Verse 24.

WHEN by pain and care oppressed,
Anguish fills the trembling breast,
When our earthly comforts fail,
When temptation's floods assail,
Father ! in that fearful hour,
Aid us by thy heavenly power,

When the blasts of adverse fate
Leave the mighty desolate,
When around in ruin wide
Fall the lofty domes of pride,
May our tower of safety be,
Rock of ages ! based on thee.

Transient are the joys of earth,
As the hour that gives them birth ;
Faithless as a lovely dream,
Fading at the morning's beam ;
Treacherous as the fleeting sand,
Wave-washed on the ocean's strand.

But thy servants' trust, O Lord !
Rests on thine unfailing word,
On the precepts Jesus gave,
On our Father's will to save,
On the strength, and light, and love,
Beaming from thy throne above.

XXXI.

CHRIST RAISES THE WIDOW'S SON.

LUKE VII. 1 - 16.

Behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow. — Verse 12.

Few were the joys the widow knew,
In poverty resigned ;
But one loved boy beside her grew,
Obedient, faithful, kind.
His bounding step, his glance so bright,
Filled the low cot with joy ;
The mother gazed with fond delight,
Upon her noble boy.

Years passed, and every passing year
Some fresh adornment gave.
Oh oft the loveliest beings here
Are earliest for the grave !
Years passed ; he stood in manhood's grace,
Still duteous by her side ;
And she could mark his father's face,
With sadness, yet with pride.

It came, — the inscrutable decree!

“The will of God be done!”

The widow said, and bent the knee,

Beside her lifeless son.

Her heart was broken; yet she bore

Meekly God's holy will,

And, while she felt life's joy was o'er,

She suffered, and was still.

It was not o'er. A voice was heard,

Of calm but awful sound;

And Death, at that controlling word,

His iron chain unbound.

Mourner! that voice e'en now can save;

And calm, submissive Faith

Can gain the victory o'er the grave,

And wrest the sting from Death.

XXXII.

CURE OF DEMONIACS.

MATTHEW VIII. 18 - 34.

There met him two possessed with devils, coming out of the tombs, exceeding fierce, so that no man might pass by that way. — Verse 28.

O UNCREATED Light and Love,
Beaming in majesty above!
Thou who didst grant the mental ray
At nature's dawn, to worthless clay,
And through thy Son's blest word unbind
The veil that hid the darkened mind;
Still bid the powers of evil flee,
And sanctify our souls to thee!

O banish from thy servants' path,
The demon host of Scorn and Wrath,
Error, with wildly beaming eye,
And dull Insensibility,
Blind Prejudice, and fierce Desire,
And Malice, with his heart of fire.
At thy command we burst their chain,
And in thy freedom rise again.

When dimly lie before us spread
The silent regions of the dead,
While their stern king the unerring dart
Points at the Christian's trembling heart,
Thy mercy, Lord! shall still sustain;
The last dread foe shall frown in vain;
Thy sons shall pass the valley o'er,
And in thy heavenly courts adore.

XXXIII.

CHRIST AT CAPERNAUM.

MARK II. 1-22.

And straightway many were gathered together, insomuch that there was no room to receive them, no, not so much as about the door. — Verse 2.

And he went forth again by the sea-side ; and all the multitude resorted unto him, and he taught them. — Verse 13.

UPON Tiberias' shore he stood,
The object of a thousand eyes,
Where now beside the lonely flood
All desolate Capernaum lies.*
Then commerce sought the crowded strand,
And fertile fields around were bright,
Before the Roman's iron hand
Had o'er them thrown war's crimson blight.

Yet in that hour, when, promised long,
Their King, beloved of God, was near,
The city poured her countless throng
Messiah's voice of love to hear.

* " Buckingham, Burckhardt, and some other writers, believe it to have been the place now called Talhewyn, where there are ruins indicative of a considerable place at some former period." — Robinson's Calmet ; Article " Capernaum."

They saw his works; delighted hung
Upon his doctrine's glorious word,
As when some lovely lay is sung,
With raptures of a moment heard.*

Oh had they given to him their heart
In faithfulness of zeal and love,
And borne through good and ill their part
Their service to their Lord to prove,
Then had Judea raised her head,
In glory nevermore to cease,
O'er mightiest realms her conquests spread,
Beneath thy banner, Prince of Peace!

And oh, our Saviour! when to thee
With eager love our spirits turn,
Make us from sin's enthrallment free,
Nor vainly let affection burn.
Not only in excitement's hour,
But till the day of life shall end,
Make us to feel thy Gospel's power,
And own thee evermore our friend.

* "And lo, thou art unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument; for they hear thy words, but they do them not." — Ezekiel xxxiii. 32.

XXXIV.

THE DAUGHTER OF JAIRUS.

LUKE VIII. 41-56.

But he said, Weep not ; she is not dead, but sleepeth. — Verse 52.

THE last faint sigh is o'er, and by the side
Of her dead child the hopeless mourner weepeth ;
But hark ! the Saviour's voice doth gently chide ;
“ Weep not,” he saith, “ she is not dead, but sleepeth.”

Even thus, in hours of anguish like to hers,
Can we not hear that voice, despair reproving ?
The Saviour to his trustful followers
Half takes away the agony of loving.

For oh ! in love's sweet rose an unseen thorn
Still lurks ; the object we so fondly cherish,
From the embrace of fond affection torn,
May in the springtime of our gladness perish.

“ She is not dead, but sleepeth.” At thy word,
Blest Saviour ! life upon that cheek was blooming.
Thus shall our loved ones rise, when thou, O Lord !
Shalt call them forth, the light of life reluming.

We will not think them dead ; their trials done,
Calmly they sleep, their God's protection sharing ;
Or like their Saviour, they before have gone,
A place for those they loved in heaven preparing.

How knelt those parents at Messiah's feet,
The thanks of overflowing hearts addressing !
How should our praise the God of mercy greet,
For faith's bright vision of the promised blessing !

XXXV.

CHRIST'S CHARGE TO HIS APOSTLES.

MATTHEW X.

He that taketh not up his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. — Verse 38.

“ON ! till we place it there,
His cross let Jesus bear !”
’T was thus his harsh command the Roman gave.
The fainting Son of God
Beneath his burthen trod
That last sad journey, ending with the grave.

Burthen of shame and woe !
How does the heart o’erflow
At thought of him, that bitter cross who bore,
But we have each our own,
To others oft unknown,
Which we must bear till life shall be no more.

And shall we fear to tread,
The path where Jesus led,
The pure, the holy one, for us who died ?
Or shall we shrink at shame,
Endured for Jesus’ name,
Our glorious Lord, once spurned and crucified ?

If through the accursed tree,
We might be worthy thee,
Saviour ! accepted in thy world on high,
Would we not boldly dare
Even thy dread cross to bear,
Rejoicing in the thought, like thee to die ?

Then midst the woes that wait
On this our mortal state,
Patience shall cheer affliction, toil, and loss ;
And though the tempter's art
Assail our struggling heart,
Still, Saviour ! in thy name we bear our cross.

XXXVI.

CHRIST'S EULOGY OF JOHN THE BAPTIST.

MATTHEW XI. 1 - 19.

Among them that are born of women, there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist ; notwithstanding, he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. — Verse 11.

WHY to the desert went ye forth to gaze,
Tribes of the Lord ? What object saw ye there
To draw you from the city's crowded ways,
Your daily walks of pleasure and of care,
And fix your thousands there in breathless awe,
Submissive to receive the Almighty's law ?

Was he to whom ye listened as a reed
By the wind shaken, wavering and unsure ?
He who aspires the flock of God to feed,
Upright and steadfast, must the storm endure,
Owning no law but duty's lofty call,
God's will to him must ay be all in all.

Wore he soft raiment, as they wear who dwell
In kingly mansions ? No ; his rude attire
The message of his lips befitted well ;
Stern warning to the guilty, words of fire

'To melt the frozen heart, and bid to flow
In brightness forth, its stream now dull and slow.

Greatest among the prophets ! He went forth,
Or to the desert or the royal hall,
Indifferent where, clad in his own high worth,
And listening ever to the spirit's call,
Its awful mandates still prepared to bring
To guilty people, or to guilty king.

Forever, lofty prophet, shines thy fame ;
Yet greater, girt with more resistless might,
The least of those, who in the Saviour's name
And in the Saviour's spirit dare the fight.
Prayers are their weapons, patience their defence ;
They conquer all by love's omnipotence.

XXXVII.

THE WEEPING WOMAN IN THE PHARISEE'S HOUSE.

LUKE VII. 36 - 50.

Which of them will love him most? Simon answered and said,
I suppose that he to whom he forgave most. — Verses 42, 43.

LORD, we have wandered far,
Far from thy blessed light.
We own and feel how frail we are,
How sinful in thy sight.

But in the darkest hour,
Thy voice, O Lord! we hear;
It breathes forgiveness, hope and power,
It speaks our Father near.

Lord! thou hast much forgiven,
O may our love arise
In grateful incense to thy heaven,
A worthy sacrifice.

Saviour! it is not ours
To bathe with tears thy feet,
To strew thy way with votive flowers,
With gifts of price to greet.

Yet from the grateful heart
Our thanks may rise above,
And never from our souls depart
The memory of thy love.



XXXVIII.

MISSION OF THE SEVENTY DISCIPLES.

LUKE X. 1 - 24.

And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name. And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven. — Verses 17, 18.

OFt on the great Messiah's way,
When the harsh din of conflict rose,
And toil and peril round him lay,
While men and fiends alike were foes,
Visions of glorious scenes to come
Were sent by Heaven to cheer his sight,
As the faint ray from distant home
Revives the wanderer's heart at night.

Thus, when with eye and heart of joy
Back from their toil the seventy came,
And told that on that high employ
Demons had bowed before thy name,

The lofty prophet-spirit woke
 Within thy breast, God's holy Son!
And forth the rapt announcement broke
 Of conquest by thy people won.

Not Moses, when in age he strung
 For Israel the prophetic lyre,
Not David, when the lays he sung
 Were glowing with devotion's fire,
So high an inspiration knew,
 Or owned a vision so sublime,
As when his glance the Saviour threw
 Down the far stream of coming time.

Satan he saw as lightning fall
 Before the conquest of his word,
The power that held the world in thrall
 Bow to the sceptre of the Lord.
O'er coming centuries as they rolled
 He saw his cross triumphant rise,
Till the millennial age of gold
 Bounded the scene and touched the skies.

Yes, mighty King! The power is thine;
 By God to thee of old 't was given.
O let thy peaceful banner shine,
 And evil from the world be driven.
O Father! arm our zeal and love,
 To aid the triumphs of thy Son,
Till here, as in thy heaven above,
 Thy kingdom come, thy will be done!

XXXIX.

THE GOOD SAMARITAN.

LUKE X. 25-42.

Go and do thou likewise. — Verse 37.

Go forth, disciple of the blessed one,
Thou art not sent on earth to live in vain ;
Thou hast a task that must ere night be done ;
Forth to the world, where sin and suffering reign.

Wherever pines in woe a human heart,
If thou canst aid, go find thy duty there ;
Where sin's wild votaries choose the evil part,
Be prompt to rescue, merciful to spare.

O, thou may'st close thine eyes against the ills
That near thy prosperous dwelling darkly flow ;
And while base joy thy selfish bosom fills,
Pass on, forgetful of thy brethren's woe.

There comes an hour, when from the spirit's ken
The mists that veil shall lightly float away ;
Then haply mid the haunts of suffering men,
Shalt thou the traces of thy path survey.

Then with what grief will negligence behold
The dark results of former ill employ !
How will the spirit, that for God was bold,
Taste in its faithful deeds celestial joy !

On that chilled hearth, where penury droops to die,
How had thy bounty lit the cheering flame !
How had kind words of Christian sympathy
Turned to a better path yon child of shame !

The heart thy careless sneers had taught to scorn
The holier feelings of its youthful hours,
Now void of virtue, and of hope forlorn,
To vilest uses turns the noblest powers.

Go thou, and serve thy God, while lasts the day ;
Then when the night shall come, may visions rise
Of those around whose path a gladdening ray
Has fallen from thy gentle charities.

Then shall the sons of want around thee stand,
Who through thy bounteous care were clothed
and fed ;
The young offender, whom thy pitying hand
Rescued from vice, and to the Saviour led.

Yet more ; the love that casts out every fear
Shall ceaseless thy rejoicing anthem swell ;
And here on earth, and in the eternal sphere,
Thy Saviour and thy God with thee shall dwell.

XL.

COURAGE IN THE CAUSE OF CHRIST.

LUKE XII. 1 - 12.

Be not afraid of them that kill the body. — Verse 4.

Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God. — Verse 8.

* THERE sat within a dungeon's gloom
A female form of mournful grace.
Thoughts of her stern approaching doom
Had driven the rose-tint from her face.
Yet not for that, amid her woe,
Did her high heart its faith resign ;
And that pale cheek at times would glow
With light, whose glory was divine.

They came, the dear ones of her hearth,
To whom her earthly love was given ;
They strove to win again to earth
The spirit, ready now for heaven.

* The incidents of these lines were taken, with scarcely any alteration, from the narrative of the martyrdom of Perpetua, A. D. 202. See Milman's History of Christianity, Book II. Chap. viii.

Husband and sister sued in vain,
In vain, though burning tears replied ;
To love she gave those drops of pain,
Triumphant over all beside.

Her aged father came and knelt,
Bowed his white locks before his child ;
And the sad daughter deeply felt,
Yet through her tears looked up and smiled.
They brought her infant ; as he lay
Before her, in his slumber fair,
Almost the mother's heart gave way,
But God had heard his martyr's prayer.

Her strength arose. " My child shall be
Safe in thy sheltering care, my God !
I give him, this sad hour, to thee ;
And when this dreadful path is trod,
May I not hope, in robes of light
'To hover o'er his slumbering head,
And o'er my father's locks of white
A spirit-daughter's blessing shed ? "

She died ; that spirit, calm and high,
Sustained her through the dreadful hour.
She died as those alone can die
Whom faith in God has girt with power.
To her own fearless heart, her hand
Guided the gladiator's sword.
Yet, through their grief, the Christian band
That night the hymn of triumph poured.

The pure, the faithful, was at rest ;
For her a glorious crown was won,
And now in mansions of the blest,
On that fair brow forever shone.
And courage rose to meet their death,
In those the Christians' path who trod ;
And, won by her undaunted faith,
A thousand heathen turned to God.

XLI.

TRUST IN DIVINE PROTECTION.

LUKE XII. 13 - 34.

Fear not, little flock ; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. — Verse 32.

FEAR not, my chosen flock,
Though through the wilds ye go.
Forth from the everlasting Rock
The living waters flow.

Afar that awful height
Its cooling shadow throws,
And the green pastures there invite
To banquet and repose.

Christian ! though all around
Doubts rise, and cares annoy.
Fear not ; beyond this narrow bound
Lie realms of peace and joy.

Should danger threaten life,
It cannot kill the soul ;
Then, Christian, steadfast meet the strife ;
Thy God can make thee whole.

Fear not, though sin assail.
Thou hast a friend within;
In faith's impenetrable mail
Thou yet shalt conquer sin.

Fear not, though life depart;
But lift thy closing eye.
'The Saviour whispers to thy heart,
"Mine is the victory."

XLII.

DUTY OF WATCHFULNESS.

LUKE XII. 35-59.

Blessed are those servants, whom the lord, when he cometh, shall find watching. — Verse 37.

REDEEMER! by thy care and love,
A charge is given us from above.
In constant duty must we wait
As servants at their master's gate;
Remembering all thy holy law,
With zealous love, and fear, and awe,
And ready, when our Lord shall come,
Joyful to bid him welcome home.

Blest are the servants whom their lord
Thus finds obedient to his word.
Fearless may they his presence meet,
And as their friend, their master greet.
His eye their ready love shall see,
And mark their tried fidelity;
And kindness from his lips shall flow,
And large rewards his hands bestow.

Thus, holy Master, in the day
When heaven and earth shall pass away,
When, in the world's astonished sight,
Thy throne of judgment stands in light,
May we, from every terror free,
That awful preparation see ;
And, e'en in nature's closing hour,
Bless our Redeemer's love and power.

XLIII.

THE BARREN FIG-TREE.

LUKE XIII.

Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig-tree, and find none ; cut it down ; why cumbereth it the ground ? — Verse 7.

YEAR passeth after year. O Lord our God !

Thy mercy spares us, and thy might sustains.
Sometimes we feel the chastening of thy rod,

Sometimes thy love with gentle voice complains.
By turns thy sun hath smiled, thy storms have frowned,
No worthy fruit is ours, vain cumberers of the ground.

Shouldst thou in anger speak, Lord ! who could stand
Before thy justice in its dreadful hour ?

Who could endure the thunders of thy hand,
What human might arrest thy sovereign power ?
Spare us, O God, thy mercy we implore !
Grant to the barren tree space for one trial more.

One trial more ! If then we bear no fruit,
O God of justice ! who shall longer stay
Thine arm ? Behold the axe is at the root.

O let repentance prune our faults away.
Thy grace, O Lord ! in plenteous showers descend,
And bid the rescued boughs with clustering honors
bend.

XLIV.

THE RAISING OF LAZARUS.

JOHN XI.

Jesus wept. — Verse 35.

He cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. — Verse 43.

THE sisters whom the Saviour loved
Have sent, their Master's aid to claim ;
And is that gentle heart unmoved,
Summoned in friendship's hallowed name ?

Firm heart of faith ! He knows his power
From death's approach his friend could save ;
Yet, keenly feeling, waits the hour
Till Lazarus sink into the grave.

And now 't is o'er ; his spirit knows
His friend hath felt death's icy chain ;
Now to the presence of his foes
Steadfast he leads his mournful train.

What female form, with pallid cheek,
Sinks at his feet and breathes her moan ?
As Jesus hears her accents meek,
The sufferer's woe recalls his own.

Yet there is comfort ; " He shall rise ;
In life renewed thy friend shall stand."
" I know," the pious mourner cries,
" In the last hour, at God's right hand."

With the same words, lo ! Mary kneels.
The thought that seems her Lord to chide,
Her reverent love but half reveals ;
" Hadst thou been here, he had not died."

He groans ; he seeks the recent grave ;
He weeps ; the touch of grief and love
Thrills through his breast, as to the cave
The sad assembly silent move.

The form that once was Lazarus lies
Cold in death's marble stillness there.
" Father ! I thank thee," Jesus cries ;
" I know thou always hear'st my prayer !

" Lazarus, come forth !" Nor doubt nor fear
Disturbed that calm, majestic tone ;
Nor vainly on death's clay-cold ear
Rung thy command, God's holy Son !

On the dim eyes, the light again
Bade the fair forms of nature rise,
While through chilled heart and pulseless vein
Life's newly wakened current flies.

Thou, who didst shed those loving tears,
Then speak that word of power divine!
When thy dread summons nature hears,
Redeemer! own us then for thine!



XLV.

CHRIST GREATER THAN SOLOMON.

MATTHEW XII. 22 - 50.

.A greater than Solomon is here. — Verse 42.

High was the glory which thy kingdom graced,
Wise son of David, when on Israel's throne
By thy great father's hand securely placed
The crown of Ammon* on thy temples shone.
Ephraim with Judah vied to own thy sway,
And far Euphrates' tribes united to obey.

High was thy glory. War was heard no more;
Egypt and Sidon thine alliance sought;
And gold and gems from distant Ophir's shore
In rich profusion to thy halls were brought;
Her soft-toned lyre for thee had pleasure strung,
And Israel's shouts of joy around thy palace rung.

* 2 Samuel xii. 30.

High was thy glory, when unstained by pride,
Thou sought'st the trophies of a nobler fame ;
Nor was thy prayer by heavenly grace denied,
But distant lands to hear thy wisdom came,
And, not in words of courtly flattery,
The gray-haired sages owned their vanquisher in thee.

And highest, when in that unrivalled fane,
Planned by thy wisdom, by thy power achieved,
While Asaph's sons high raised the choral strain,
Thy God his servant's kingly gift received ;
His glory through the accepted house was poured,
And kneeling thousands owned the presence of the
Lord.

Greatest of earthly kings! But one is here,
Before whose glory even thine must fade ;
Nations before his throne bent not in fear,
Nor conquering hosts his sovereign will obeyed.
Meekness his robe, and truth the crown he bore,
His kingdom is the heart, his reign forevermore.

XLVI.

CHRIST TEACHING IN PARABLES.

MATTHEW XIII. 1 - 23.

And he spake many things unto them in parables, saying, Behold, a sower went forth to sow. — Verse 3.

REDEEMER, lowly in thy majesty !

Thou didst not give thy precepts to the crowd

Who round thee gathered, in the language proud

Of man's presuming, cold philosophy ;

But with benignant look and friendly voice

Didst thou in simple tales attention win,

And lead thy people from the founts of sin

To fix on life's true spring their hallowed choice.

Gracious Redeemer, may we learn of thee !

Persuasion's holiest power is ay denied

To the stern voice and stony eye of pride ;

Nor can the feelings flow forth warm and free,

Save when in him who pleads the cause of right

A loving heart and simple words unite.

XLVII.

EVIL INFLUENCES. PARABLE OF THE TARES.

MATTHEW XIII. 24 - 53.

An enemy hath done this. — Verse 23.

I MARKED the sprightly air of youth
As life's career began,
And courage, innocence and truth
Gave promise of the man.
A sister's heart with rapture swelled,
A brother gazed with joy,
And parents with deep love beheld
The duteous, generous boy.

Again I looked ; the manly brow
At lawless shrines had bent,
The lip that breathed truth's holy vow
To vile deceit was lent.
The eye was dim with long excess ;
Nerveless the well-strung frame,
He found his wretched happiness
In deeds of sin and shame.

And whence that ruin ! Friendship's hand
The fatal cup had given ;
The strength, temptation to withstand,
Had not been sought of Heaven.
To the false friend's insidious voice
Too ready ear he gave.
More would'st thou know ? Truth lends a voice
To yon dishonored grave.

“ Consigned to me in manhood's prime
Ere half his years were spent,
The victim of another's crime,
But ah ! not innocent, —
His trembling spirit waits to hear
The Eternal's just decree.
Then too, deceiver ! shall appear
The doom assigned to thee.”

XLVIII.

THE DAUGHTER OF HERODIAS.

MARK VI. 14-29.

The daughter of the said Herodias came in, and danced, and pleased Herod. — Verse 22.

I will that thou give me by and by in a charger, the head of John the Baptist. — Verse 25.

BEAUTY! idol of the heart;
When the mind reflects the face,
Never from thy sway we part,
Decked with every gentle grace.
Thou art like a sunbeam, sent
Earth and sky with joy to fill,
Kindling up the firmament,
Giving warmth where all was chill.

But when evil passions glance
From the bright but treacherous eye,
When the blooming countenance
Does the sinful heart belie,
When the pleading voice of woe
With the lovely hath no power,
Angels' tears might freely flow
O'er creation's fairest flower.

Maiden ! is thy faultless cheek
Bright with health and youthful bloom ?
For thy best adornments seek
Those that shall outlast the tomb.
Own his heavenly power who gave
Beauty's dangerous heritage ;
Other blessings meekly crave,
Bright alike in youth and age.

Pray for sweet humility,
For contentment's ceaseless charm,
Wise and watchful charity,
Patience, that can pain disarm.
But, all other gifts above,
Pray that grace from God be thine,
To bestow thy heart's best love
At thy heavenly Father's shrine.

XLIX.

JESUS WALKS ON THE SEA.

MATTHEW XIV. 13 - 36.

And in the fourth watch of the night, Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea. — Verse 25.

LORD, in whose might the Saviour trod
The dark and stormy wave ;
And trusted in his Father's arm
Omnipotent to save !

When darkly round our footsteps rise
The floods and storms of life,
Send thou thy spirit down to still
The elemental strife.

Strong in our trust, on thee reposed,
The ocean path we'll dare ;
Though waves around us rage and foam,
Since thou art with us there.

L.

CHRIST THE ONLY SOURCE OF TRUE SATISFACTION.

JOHN VI. 22 - 71.

I am the bread of life ; he that cometh to me shall never hunger ;
and he that believeth on me shall never thirst. — Verse 35.

Lord, to whom shall we go ? Thou hast the words of eternal life.
— Verse 63.

SAVIOUR ! to thee I come !

Earth cannot fill the spirit's strong desire
That dares to higher, purer joys aspire.

Holiest, oh take me home !

Pleasure in vain I sought

Where riot o'er the hours of darkness reigns ;
But, midst the revel still the heart complains
No joy the scene has brought.

Ambition's trumpet-call

I heard, and hasted in her train to stand ;
But when her glittering prizes filled my hand,
Heart-sick I turned from all.

Then Avarice spread her store,

And boundless wealth was mine ; but still mine eye
Sought midst her gold and costly pageantry
For one bright treasure more.

Gifts of this world, in vain
For me ye glitter, transient as ye are.
The thoughtful spirit cannot bend to wear
Your gross material chain.

Ye cannot save from death ;
Ye cannot lengthen man's appointed hour,
Nor from that unknown, all-controlling power
Redeem the forfeit breath.

Saviour ! Thou hast alone
The words of life eternal ; thou hast trod
Through death's dread vale up to the mount of God,
And made the pathway known.

Through love and prayer and faith !
Thus, Son of God ! 't was thine to rise on high ;
Thus, Saviour ! be it mine to live and die,
And triumph over death !

LI.

GOVERNMENT OF THE HEART.

MARK VII. 1-23.

From within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts.
All these evil things come from within, and defile the man.—
Verses 21-23.

O THOU by whose unfailing hand
The springs of life are fed,
And the bright current of the heart
Through bounding veins is led!

Protect us by thy grace divine
From ills that rise within,
From passion's wild o'erpowering might
And the deceits of sin.

Thou know'st our frame, thou know'st our hearts,
To us, how oft unknown!
Oh grant that all their thoughts may be
In joy and woe thine own.

As thy mysterious Providence
The vital flood supplies,
As ceaseless to thy viewless touch
The throbbing heart replies;

Thus, Lord ! the holy stream of grace
Incessant deign to pour ;
And with each pulse, our grateful hearts
Shall love thee more and more.



LII.

THE WOMAN OF CANAAN.

MATTHEW XV. 21-39.

And she said, Truth, Lord ; yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master's table. Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith ; be it unto thee, even as thou wilt.
— Verses 27, 28.

Oh not in vain, Redeemer ! at thy feet
Did that meek suppliant pour her anxious prayer,
Though slowly came thy word of love to greet
The heart that struggled with its load of care.

To prove her faith, to give to those around
A lesson, ne'er from memory to depart,
Messiah for one moment seemed to wound
The suffering mother's earnest, trusting heart.

Yet sure thine eye, thy tone, Redeemer blest !
Did thy benignant purpose half reveal ;
Else had the boldest faith its plea suppressed,
A plea that only gentle hearts could feel.

Father, to whom thy children bend in prayer !

Oft by thy wisdom are our prayers denied.

May we by constant faith repel despair,

Nor from thine altar turn in sullen pride.

We know thy mercy, Lord ! Through many a year

Thy blessings round us have abundant flowed ;

Why should we yield to unbelieving fear,

If all we ask be not at once bestowed ?

Let us pray on ; — with pleading still more meek

Bring our hearts' pride before thine altar low ;

And if we may not gain the gift we seek,

Thou wilt, O God ! thy pitying love bestow.

For none to thee, All-bounteous, can draw near,

And thou, neglectful, from the suppliant turn ;

Nor any seek thy grace with heart sincere,

Yet not the goodness of our God discern.

Christian, faint not in prayer ! Though years may roll,

Thy God at length his suppliant child will bless ;

And when this life is o'er, thy raptured soul

Shall own his love in heavenly happiness.

LIII.

CHRIST'S PROPHECY OF HIS CHURCH.

MATTHEW XVI. 1-20.

And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. — Verse 18.

“I BUILD upon this Rock,
Though fiercest foes assail.
My church unmoved shall stand the shock,
Nor hell itself prevail.”
He spoke; the world in vain arrayed
Its power against his name;
Vain was the soldier's conquering blade,
The bigot's torturing flame.

Upon a monarch's crown,
Saviour ! thy cross was seen,
And in thy gorgeous fane bent down
The Roman's sainted Queen.*

* St. Helena, the mother of Constantine, celebrated for her zeal in erecting edifices for Christian worship. The establishment of Christianity, as the religion of the Emperor and the Empire, was soon followed by corruption and internal feuds.

More dangerous far that prosperous day
Than sorrow's darkest night;
Yet stood thy church, though dimmed her ray
By earth's unhallowed light.

There came a stormier age;
Old things were swept away,
And earth beneath barbarian rage
A helpless victim lay.
But when the desolating storm
All else had overthrown,
Thy church yet raised her sacred form
Majestic and alone.

A darker scene arose,
The midnight of the world;
And mail-clad knights against their foes
The red-cross flag unfurled.
And superstition filled the cell,
And wove the scourge of pain,
While priestcraft, with its book and bell,
Held earth in mental chain.

Yet did not hell prevail
Against thy church, O Lord!
Stronger than armed crusader's mail,
More searching than his sword,
The spirit of thy love and might
Was working silently;
Slowly the darkened heavens grew bright,
And man again was free.

Saviour ! thy church yet stands ;
And though the world oppose,
That church, unbuilt by human hands,
No human might o'erthrows.
Still on thy chosen Rock, O Lord !
The living Temple raise,
Till every heart receive thy word.
And every voice be praise.

LIV.

CHRIST'S REPROOF TO PETER.

MATTHEW XVI. 21 - 28.

But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan, thou art an offence unto me ; for thou savorest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men. — Verse 23.

O SUFFERING friend of human kind !

How, as the fatal hour drew near,
Came thronging on thy holy mind
The images of grief and fear !

Gethsemane's sad midnight scene,
The faithless friends, the exulting foes,
The thorny crown, the insult keen,
The scourge, the cross, before thee rose.

Did not thy spirit shrink dismayed,
As the dark vision o'er it came ;
And, though in sinless strength arrayed,
Turn, shuddering from the death of shame ?

Then did another vision rise,
As in the desert's lonely hour,*

* In the Temptation in the Wilderness (Matt. IV. 8-10.) and in the present instance, our Saviour appears to have had forcibly

Of lofty patriot enterprise,
Of victory and royal power.

Rose on thine ear the shout of joy
As Israel hailed her conquering Lord,
And nations, banded to destroy,
Yielded to thy resistless sword.

Against thy might, upheld of heaven,
In vain had Cæsar's legions stood ;
Nor aught of aid had Herod given,
Stained with the Baptist's holy blood.

But thy pure spirit, sinless Lord !
That earthly thought indignant spurned ;
And from thy stern reproving word,
Abashed, the rash adviser turned.

Oh, when around our path there lowers
Danger's dark cloud, or sorrow's night,
Thy blest example nerve our powers
To press on, fearless, for the right !

presented to his mind the idea of fulfilling the expectations of his countrymen by establishing a temporal kingdom ; and the vehemence of his language, nearly the same in both cases, shows that he felt that there would be danger, even to him, in suffering the idea to remain in his mind a moment unrebuked. What a lesson to us of the necessity of promptly repelling temptation !

LV.

THE TRANSFIGURATION.

MATTHEW XVII. 1-13.

Lord, it is good for us to be here. — Verse 4.

“It is good for us to be here, O Lord !
With thee on the sacred mount,
To see thy glory, and hear thy word,
And drink from the holy fount.
While the great and the blessed of former days
Again on the earth appear,
On the wondrous scene as entranced we gaze,
It is good for us to be here.”

Thus spake the ardent disciple of old ;
But the vision passed away.
A moment only they might behold
The Redeemer's bright array.
Then back to the scenes of their daily life
With him they must return,
To teach the unheeding, and mix in strife
With the cold, and false, and stern.

But they brought to those scenes the spirit high
Which they felt on the sacred hill.

The light that had burst on the raptured eye
Was glowing within them still.
And the voice that came from that golden cloud,
And spake in the holiest name,
Thrilled through their hearts, in the turbulent crowd,
As when to the ear it came.

And is it not thus, when the Christian meets
His God on the mount of prayer ?
Though no outward voice the suppliant greets,
He knows that the Lord is there.
In the spirit of Jesus he kneels and prays,
Afar from all earthly strife,
And around him glow heaven's brightest rays,
And he breathes a holier life.

It may not last. On the sacred hill
The apostle might not rest ;
He must go to combat with human ill,
To make the nations blest.
And not alone on the mount of prayer
Must the Christian serve his God ;
But the burden of daily life must bear,
And tread where his Saviour trod.

But with him through every changing scene
Doth the spirit of prayer abide.
When earth is lovely and heaven serene,
That spirit his course shall guide ;
And when the storm rages, and woe and wrath
Might an earthborn courage quell,
He knows that his God surveys his path,
And ordereth all things well.

LVI.

THE FATHER OF THE LUNATIC YOUTH.

MARK IX. 14 - 29.

And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe ; help thou mine unbelief. — Verse 24.

FATHER! when o'er our trembling hearts
Doubt's shadows gathering brood,
When faith in thee almost departs,
And gloomiest fears intrude,
Forsake us not, O God of grace,
But send those fears relief;
Grant us again to see thy face;
Lord! help our unbelief!

When sorrow comes, and joys are flown,
And fondest hopes lie dead,
And blessings, long esteemed our own,
Are now forever fled ;
When the bright promise of our spring
Is but a withered leaf,
Lord! to thy truth still let us cling;
Help thou our unbelief!

And when the powers of nature fail
Upon the couch of pain,
Nor love, nor friendship can avail
The spirit to detain,
Then, Father! be our closing eyes
Undimmed by tears of grief;
And if a trembling doubt arise,
Help thou our unbelief!

LVII.

NOT TO DESPISE THE LOWLY.

MATTHEW XVIII. 1-20.

Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones ; for I say unto you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven. — Verse 10.

THOU, for whose cultured mind the toil
Of studious years hath wisdom sought,
Enriched with learning's varied spoil,
With long experience amply fraught,
Despise not thou yon simple child,
But meekly in his features trace
That sinless heart and spirit mild,
Would yield thy lore a richer grace.

Spirits that minister on high,
Before the Father's throne of love,
Prize that unsullied purity
Each other heavenly grace above.
And never canst thou there aspire,
Till, freed from every darkening stain,
From pride, and hate, and wrong desire
Thy heart be innocent again.

Favorite of fortune ! To thy hand,
Earth's richest gifts are amply spread :
See where affliction's children stand,
And on thy bounty call for bread.
Despise them not. In robes of light
Perchance they soon shall stand arrayed,
Rejoicing always in the sight
Of glory that shall never fade.

And thou, who hast with reverence trod
The path of faith for many a year,
Accepted in the sight of God
To all his virtuous children dear,
O pity thou, but ne'er despise
The soul, debased by evil deeds.
For him, as low in dust he lies,
A kneeling seraph earnest pleads.

Nay rather, pleads before the throne
The Saviour for his Father's grace.
Eternal mercy waits alone
The tear of penitence to trace.
O scorn not thou that erring soul !
Stretch forth thy hand the fallen to raise ;
And through the arch of heaven shall roll
The angels' hymn of joyful praise.

LVIII.

FORGIVENESS.

MATTHEW XVIII. 21 - 35.

Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. — Verse 26.

O God, in grief and shame
We kneel before thy throne!
Nought from thy justice can we claim,
But be thy mercy shown!

How may our spirits dare
To face thy stainless light?
The sins our conscience cannot bear,
How shall they meet thy sight?

We cannot urge the plea,
“Have patience, and we pay.”
The debt the sinner owes to thee
Not thus can pass away.

Should deeds of faith and love
Adorn us to the last,
We could not from thy book remove
The record of the past.

Father ! to thee we fly.
Oh bid thy suppliants live !
Behold us at thy footstool lie ;
Merciful God, forgive !

And as by thy free grace
Our hope, our all, is given,
May others in our mercy trace
Our gratitude to Heaven.

LIX.

INTOLERANCE REBUKED.

LUKE IX. 49-56.

Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. — Verse 55.

THE Saviour's spirit, — is it known
To those who bear his name?
Why then does earth incessant groan
Beneath their deeds of shame?

Where he, the friend of human life,
Rebuked his followers' zeal,
Drawn in his name for bigot strife
Waved the Crusader's steel.

See where the fires of Smithfield glare,
Or trace yon dungeon cell,
Where, shut from God's pure light and air,
The heretic must dwell.

Or hear, ah shame! the frantic cry
On Charlestown's height that rose,
From helpless woman, forced to fly
Before her midnight foes.

Know ye the spirit of your Lord,
Ye rulers wise and great,
Who draw the unjust invader's sword
On some barbarian state?

Know ye whose spirit ye profess,
The war of words who wage,
And in the cause of holiness
With wrathful hearts engage?

Oh in God's temple ye may bend
Duly the punctual knee.
In vain to heaven your prayers ascend,
Unblessed by charity.

And thou, whose censure freely flows
On bigot act and word,
Be sure that thine own spirit knows
The spirit of its Lord.

LX.

MARRIAGE INDISSOLUBLE.

MARK X. 1-9.

What God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.*—
Verse 9.

OH do not part those whom their God united !
Revere the mandate by the Saviour given.
'T was in the holiest name their vows were plighted,
Sanctioned with prayer, and ratified in heaven.

What though their state be that of meek subjection
To all, thy pleasure or thy pride commands ?
Yet in each lowly heart may pure affection
Still gild with joy the darkness of their bands.

* The application which I have given to these words of our Saviour, first forcibly occurred to me as I pronounced them while uniting two slaves in marriage. I could not but reflect that man frequently did, and in the case before me might, for his convenience or caprice, put asunder those whom God had joined together. There are sincere Christians at the South, who uphold the system of slavery. Let them use their influence to put an end to that separation of husbands and wives which is in direct violation of Christ's positive command ; or if this evil be essential to the system, let them ask themselves if the system can be right.

Think not they feel the less, if hopeless sorrow
Shun the expression that can nought avail,
Nor let thy conscience vain excuses borrow,
If pride or fear repress the mourner's wail.

Law may defend thee ; but his mándate holy,
In whose dread presence thou and they shall stand,
Forbids thee thus to trample on the lowly,
And warns thee of his own avenging hand.

Thy slave and thou are, as he made ye, brothers ;
And when earth's vain distinctions cease to be,
If thou hast shown no mercy unto others,
What mercy can the Righteous mete to thee ?

•
Then spare ; if power on earth to thee be given,
Expand thy heart to pity's gentle claim ;
Exert that power as in the sight of Heaven,
And let thy brother bless thy generous name.

LXI.

CHILDREN BROUGHT TO CHRIST.

MARK X. 13-16.

Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not ;
for of such is the kingdom of God. — Verse 14.

YES ! There were some among thy hearers, Lord !
Who knew thine own blest spirit, and to thee
Brought their young children in their purity,
Deeming aright such visits would afford
Joy to a heart like thine. With gracious word
Didst thou receive them ; and that hallowed scene
Hath ever to the Christian parent been
A fount of deep delight. Thou dost accord
Thy blessing to our children. We would lead
To thee these young immortals. Oh receive
To thy divine instructions, Saviour blest !
And in thy freedom make them free indeed ;
And if in childhood they are called to leave
Our arms of love, may they with thee find rest !

LXII.

THE RICH YOUNG MAN.

MARK X. 17-31.

Then Jesus beholding him, loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest ; go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor ; and thou shalt have treasure in heaven ; and come, take up the cross, and follow me. — Verse 21.

AND didst thou love that pure ingenuous youth,
Saviour ? Oh well thy favor might be shown
To one whose zeal for holiness and truth
Seemed in clear lustre to reflect thine own.

The law of God he loved ; to that had given
His constant service from his earliest years ;
And now he seeks the messenger of heaven
With the bright mien a guiltless conscience bears.

“What lack I yet ? Oh light will seem the task,
Whate’er it be, my Father shall assign.”
Glowing with generous purpose doth he ask,
And hears from Jesus’ voice the call divine.

He hears. Why starts he with that troubled mien ?
Ah wherefore thus turns sorrowful away ?
Oh hope not, man ! that through each coming scene,
Thine own unaided strength can be thy stay.

Walk humbly still, nor only of the Lord
Instruction seek, but strength to do his will.
Look upward, and thy Father will afford
Patience to bear, and courage to fulfil.

Mistaken youth, the Saviour's saddened gaze
Follows thy steps ; and he who reigns above,
Whose mercy still delights the fallen to raise,
Forsakes not him whom Jesus deigned to love.

Perchance repentant thought reversed thy choice,
And the high promptings of thy heart restored ;
Perchance affliction's stern but friendly voice
Recalled thee to the service of thy Lord.

But past forever was that glorious hour,
When Christ's own arms were open to receive.
'The Christian hero's fame, — the Apostle's power, —
That thousands through thy preaching might believe ;

These had been thine, hadst thou his call obeyed ;
These could be thine no more. O heavenly Lord,
When duty calls us, grant thy spirit's aid,
That we may hear and do thy holy word !

LXIII.

PROVIDENCE VINDICATED.

MATTHEW XX. 1 - 19.

Is thine eye evil because I am good ? — Verse 15.

OH let not envy o'er thy heart
Her baleful power employ,
But others' happiness impart
A self-renouncing joy.

The gifts bestowed by bounteous heaven
Are richly scattered round.
Enough for thee thy God has given,
Though some may more abound.

Yes, — though in vain thou strive to rise,
Oppressed beneath thy woes,
Enough to train thee for the skies
Thy Father's love bestows.

What need'st thou more than endless bliss ?
If then thy heart repine,
Look to a brighter world than this,
And make its treasures thine.

And here, what Providence confers,
With thankful joy receive ;
Nor deem, Eternal Wisdom errs,
When thou art called to grieve.

But if the good, denied thee here
Another's wishes bless,
Praise thou thy God, with heart sincere,
For human happiness,

LXIV.

A RECOMPENSE ON HIGH.

LUKE XIV. 1-14.

Thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just. —
Verse 14.

Dost thou fear that thy labors are all in vain,
Who toilest for others' good ?
Do thy blessings flow, and thy tears like rain,
While evil is unsubdued ?
Hope on. The God who hath ordered all
His servant's path surveys ;
And not to the ground shall his labors fall
Who his Maker's voice obeys.

Dost thou strive to shed o'er the darkened mind
The light of truth divine,
While they whom thou warnest, perversely blind,
Still worship at Mammon's shrine ?
Faint not nor be weary. The Father of light
The inward eye can clear ;
But the perfect triumph of love and might
Is reserved for another sphere.

Dost thou sow in trembling and tears the seed
In thy child's unfruitful heart ?
Dost thou strive in vain his choice to lead
To the wise, the better part ?

Still strive, for a recompense divine
Is reserved for thee above,
And his grateful eyes shall yet beam on thine
With piety and love.

For it may not be that the child of prayer
Shall be lost so utterly,
That he shall not rise to bless thy care
In the realm of eternity.

No! every sigh of the parent's breast
By thy God is treasured still,
And in yonder mansions of the blest
Shall be changed to rapture's thrill.

Oh many a word, unthought of here
By him whose lips it passed,
Yieldeth rich fruit in this earthly sphere,
Fruit that shall ever last ;
And the deed, once offered at duty's shrine,
Whose memory long has fled,
Is the buried root of a hallowed vine
Whose clusters are round us spread.

And yet, should the vine put forth no more,
Nor the olive her increase yield,
Though desolate were the granary floor,
And a blight were on the field, —
Though our words of truth and our deeds of love
Should fruitless pass away,
There is One in the holy world above
Whose kindness would all repay.

LXV.

COUNTING THE COST OF RELIGION.

LUKE XIV. 15 - 35.

Which of you intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it?— Verse 28.

Salt is good, but if the salt have lost his savor, wherewith shall it be seasoned?— Verse 34.

REDEEMER! when from all the land
Thine eager hearers pressed,
Did then thy voice, in accents bland,
Allure the yet uncertain band
With hopes of earthly rest?
No; as thy strict commands they hear,
They turn away, in doubt and fear.

For thou dost bid them know the cost
Before they can be thine,
Ready for thee to count as lost
The joys of life, though valued most,
And life itself resign.
And such is still thy sacred word
To all who own thee for their Lord.

We cannot choose the better part
Yet serve as Mammon's slaves ;
We cannot give to God our heart,
Yet to each meaner sense impart
The pampering food it craves ;
Kneel at some idol folly's throne,
Then turn, uncensured, to thine own.

"Salt of the earth," thy church is styled ;
Let then the salt be pure.
How shall the world be reconciled,
Unless thy people, undefiled,
Make their election sure ?
Yet, Lord ! must humbled conscience trace
Our own deep need of pardoning grace.

Grant us, O God ! the cost to learn ;
But lest our courage fail,
Thy gracious aid may we discern,
Ready at humble prayer, to turn
The spirit's trembling scale.
Oh in our weakness may we see
Our strength, our victory in thee.

LXVI.

THE PRODIGAL SON.

LUKE XV.

But while he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.—Verse 20.

COME to the mercy of thy God,
O lost offender, come!
He spreads for thee his arms of love,
He calls the wanderer home.

Fear not that He can e'er despise
By whom thy life was given.
The love that guards that sinful life
Would win thee back to heaven.

O listen to the touching tale,
Once by the Saviour told,
Of him who wandered far away
To revel uncontrolled.

His wealth was gone; in foreign land,
Scarce rescued from despair,
He envied, worn and desolate,
The beasts their brutish fare.

He rose ; he sought his childhood's home,
Scarce daring to draw nigh,
With humblest words upon his lips,
In garb of misery.

But oh, that garb could not deceive
A father's anxious breast.
He knew, through every sad disguise
The boy he once caressed.

The father's arms, in fond embrace,
The suppliant's neck surround.
" He that was dead now lives again,
He that was lost is found."

Know'st thou thy Father, wanderer ?
Then come to him, and prove
If truly Jesus hath described
His mercy and his love.

LXVII.

THE USE OF PRESENT OPPORTUNITIES.

LUKE XVI. 1 - 13.

And the lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely ; for the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light. — Verse 8.

CHILDREN of light, awake !
At Jesus' call arise !
Forth with your leader to partake
His toils, his victories.
Ye must not idly stand,
His sacred voice who hear ;
Arm for the strife the feeble hand,
The holy standard rear.

Mark ye not how arise
The sons of worldly gain,
Each in his chosen enterprise,
Busy with hand and brain ?
Mark how the scholar toils,
The aspirant for fame,
Till decked with learning's hard-won spoils,
He wears an honored name.

With far extending schemes,
His art the statesman tries,
The soldier, fired by glory's dreams,
In thickest battle dies.
They look for their reward,
To firm endurance given ;
Can ye not view with like regard,
Your glorious prize in heaven ?

Nought doth the world afford,
But toil must be its price ;
Wilt thou not, servant of the Lord,
Then toil for paradise ?
Awake, ye sons of light !
Strive, till the prize be won ;
Far spent already is the night ;
The day comes brightening on.

The great, the endless day,
When all shall be revealed,
That ever in man's bosom lay
In secret thought concealed.
While guilt shall shrink with dread,
At heaven's indignant frown,
Virtue, by Faith and Meekness led,
Shall gain a fadeless crown.

LXVIII.

PARABLE OF THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS.

LUKE XVI. 14-31.

And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot, neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence. — Verse 26.

In youth's bright uncorrupted morn
With eager hearts we stand.
The paths of virtue and of vice
Before us far expand.
But side by side at first they seem,
And the bewildered eye
Scarce can discern which course is trod
By some fair company.

The one, alike through valley fair
And mountain cold and dark,
Keeps, by the same unvaried line,
In view the same high mark.
The other, winding, seems to blend
Now with the unchanging way,
And now, by some alluring shade,
Far off its travellers stray.

O trust not to that winding path,
Though pleasant to the sight ;
Though to thy view, with virtue's course
Its graceful curves unite.
Stretch to the bounds of mortal ken
Thy clear and thoughtful gaze,
And learn with trembling whither lead
Temptation's flowery ways.

See where the paths, diverging wide,
No more deceive thine eyes.
Yon chasm observe, that half concealed
Between them darkly lies,
Deepening and widening evermore,
Till where death's gloomy cloud
The course of all earth's travellers
Doth from the eye enshroud.

But he who with the spirit-world
Mysterious union held,
Whose eye the secrets of the grave
With kingly glance beheld,
Tells us, a gulf impassable
Shall from that chasm extend,
That vice and virtue never more
Their chosen paths may blend.

LXIX.

WE ARE UNPROFITABLE SERVANTS.

LUKE XVII. 1-19.

So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants; we have done that which was our duty to do. — Verse 10.

AND is it so? Must Virtue kneel,
Even on her field of high renown,
And ne'er the pride of conquest feel,
Though circled with its crown?

Yes; though thy fellow men should raise
Their grateful shouts to hail thy name,
Though Conscience join the well-earned praise
That truth and goodness claim;

Still in thy Maker's awful sight,
What recompense canst thou demand?
The powers which thou hast used aright
Were blessings from his hand.

His is thy strength of frame and mind;
From him thy pure emotions flowed;
Each lofty thought, each wish refined,
That in thy bosom glowed.

Canst thou do more than duty claims?

Far hence be that ambitious thought!

The wearers of earth's holiest names

Such praise in vain had sought.

The chief who, purest of the great,

The freedom he had won, sustained,

And, unseduced by kingly state,

In private worth remained;—

Through every generous breast his name

Thrills like some burst of glorious song;—

How gained he that best earthly fame?—

— Disdaining to do wrong!

He did his duty, and no more.

Do thou, in faith and meekness, thine;

And fear thou not, earth's conflict o'er,

To meet thy Friend divine.

LXX.

THE CHRISTIAN'S CONFLICT.

LUKE XVII. 20 - 37.

Whosoever shall seek to save his life, shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life, shall preserve it. — Verse 33.

In the field of deadly strife,
Lo! in vain the coward flies;
Nerveless to defend his life,
By a shameful blow he dies.

But the brave, with lofty thought,
Not of life but victory, —
Where the sternest strife is fought,
Dangers harmless pass him by.

Such the strife we all must wage,
From life's entrance to its close.
Blest the bold, who dare engage!
Woe for him who seeks repose!

Honored they who firmly stand,
While the conflict presses round;
God's own banner in their hand,
In his service faithful found.

Strengthened by the might of prayer,
Heavenly glory still in view,
Who are they, the fight that dare?
Who the foes they must subdue?

'T is the sacramental host,*
Marshalled by their conquering Lord.
Earthly joys they count as lost,
For the hopes his words afford.

What their foes? Each thought impure,
Passions fierce, that tear the soul;
Every ill that they can cure,
Every crime they can control.

Every suffering which their hand
Can with soothing care assuage;
Every evil of their land,
Every error of their age.

On then to the glorious field!
He who dies, his life shall save;
God himself shall be your shield;
He shall bless and crown the brave.

* "The sacramental host of God's elect." — COWPER.

LXXI.

DUTY OF PRAYER.

LUKE XVIII. 1-14.

Men ought always to pray, and not to faint. — Verse 1.

SEEK ye the Lord in prayer
Ye, whose young cheeks with health's warm hues are
bright!

Yes; in that spring-time fair,
Make ye your Maker's service your delight.
Bow in youth's innocence before his throne,
And make religion's blessedness your own.

And ye, in years mature,
Turn from the toil, the rage, the din, the strife;
With humble hearts and pure,
Amid life's bounties bless the Lord of life!
Seek ye the rays of heavenly wisdom, given
To light through earth's wild mazes up to heaven.

Ye, in declining age,
Pray, while your sun is sinking to the west!
His love your thoughts engage
Who calls earth's wearied wanderers to their rest.
So shall the evening sky with mercy beam,
And faith through opening clouds see glory stream.

LXXII.

THE SONS OF ZEBEDEE'S REQUEST.

MATTHEW XX. 17-28.

Whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister ;
and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant. —
Verses 26, 27.

WOULD'ST thou be great in Christ's blest company ?
Then tread the path which he to greatness trod,
And emulate in deep humility
The zeal and patience of the Son of God.

Go, seek the mourner, seek the child of sin ;
Pour consolation on the wounded heart ;
Strive to his God the erring soul to win,
And bid the pangs of conscious guilt depart.

Enter thy lowly dwelling, and fulfil,
With steady cheerfulness, thy duties there ;
Let the blest law of love control thy will,
Yet others' harsher spirit meekly bear.

If wealth be thine, with ready hand dispense
Thy treasure to relieve thy brethren's woe ;
Yet seek not thou in fame thy recompense,
But silent as a stream thy bounty flow.

If thou hast power or talent, O beware !
Thou may'st not hide the consecrated light.
For God and man it shines ; but be thy care,
Lest vanity obscure the offering bright.

Meek, if thy lot be lowly, be thy soul,
As his, who had not where to lay his head, —
Meek, if to thee the tide of fortune roll,
And all earth's richest gifts around are spread.

Nor hope thou, when thy labors here shall end,
For crowns on high, and greatness here outgrown ;
Think not on angels' pinions to ascend,
And shine admired upon a heavenly throne.

Thine own meek spirit is thy crown of life,
Thy Father's smile upon thy soul shall rest,
As high o'er earthly fame, as earthly strife,
Peace, holiness and love shall make thee blest.

LXXIII.

ZACCHEUS THE PUBLICAN.

LUKE XIX. 1-10.

The son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost. — Verse 10.

FRIEND of the friendless, in thy meekness great!
When Judah's vales were hallowed by thy tread,
Not on the Pharisee, with pride elate,
The seeming righteous, were thy favors shed.

'T was thine to raise the fallen, the lost to win,
By many a gentle word, to virtue's ways, —
To give repentance to the slave of sin,
And teach the mourner's lips the notes of praise.

The publican, the outcast of his race,
Scorned by the wealthy, by the poor abhorred,
With wonder listened to thy words of grace,
And owned thee, with repentant tears, his Lord.

Sternly his hardened heart had learned to dare
The priest's anathema, the patriot's scorn.
But a kind word his spirit could not bear,
And love and hope within his breast were born.

O thou, who, champion of some lofty cause,
Would'st right the injured, the unjust reprove,
While prompt to plead for God's eternal laws,
Forget not the prevailing power of Love!

The might that won the battles of the Lord
Is yet resistless, as in ancient days.
Patience thine armor be, and truth thy sword,
And in the name of Christ thy standard raise.

LXXIV.

PARABLE OF THE TEN POUNDS.

LUKE XIX, 11 - 28.

Occupy till I come. — Verse 13.

THE twelve went forth, — a glorious prize
Entrusted to their zeal and faith,
And in their Master's enterprise
Called to be faithful unto death.
Their trust, the pearl of matchless worth,
Their task, the conquest of the earth.

And can we not, O Lord! aspire
To share the trust thy chosen bore,
Though not, like them, with words of fire
To spread thy name from shore to shore?
Yes; even to us hath God assigned
The task to labor for mankind.

Yes; while a fellow mortal sighs
In anguish, we can render less; —
While childhood lifts its earnest eyes,
And asks our aid to guide and bless; —
While there are clouds we can remove; —
While there are beings we can love; —

While, by a life of innocence,
It may be ours for thee to win
A soul to heartfelt penitence
Back from the paths of woe and sin, —
The apostles' glorious trust we share,
The banner of the cross to bear.

And when our Sovereign shall appear,
The vanquished world beneath his feet,
O may our spirits, free from fear,
The inquest of his justice meet,
And, faithful in our past employ,
Find entrance to our Master's joy.

LXXV.

CHRIST'S ENTRANCE INTO JERUSALEM.

LUKE XIX. 29 - 44.

Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord ; peace in heaven, and glory in the highest. — Verse 33.

And when he was come near, he beheld the city and wept over it. — Verse 41.

REJOICE, rejoice, Jerusalem !

Thy Saviour draweth nigh,—
Not in the pride of earthly state,
Yet full of majesty.

The royal robe of righteousness
Envelopes him around,
And with the diadem of truth
His holy brows are crowned.

Rejoice, rejoice, O Israel,

Before thy glorious King !
He comes, to thine afflicted land,
Deliverance to bring.

Beneath his meek and gentle sway,
Dominion shall be thine,
More rich than e'er thy monarchs held
Of David's ancient line.

Dominion o'er those enemies
That war against the soul ;
Freedom from passion, and from pride,
And Mammon's base control.
Yet more ; not earthly sway alone
Is to his sceptre given :
He comes in God his Father's name,—
His kingdom is of Heaven.

Why weeps the holy visitor,
As from the mountain's height
The city of a hundred kings
Expands before his sight ?
“ If thou had'st known, in this thy day,
The mandate of thy God !
But ah ! his love thou hast despised,
Soon must thou feel his rod.”

In vain, in vain, O Israel,
The voice of mercy calls ;
And stern their hearts, Jerusalem,
Who rule within thy walls.
Denounced by those he came to save,
Forsaken and denied,
Behold the King of righteousness,
Scourged, bleeding, crucified !

Yet sounds the call, Oh Saviour !
“ Christians, behold your King !
Meet him with prompt obedience,
Your glad hosannas bring.”

We hail thee, Messenger of God,
To our revolted race !
O make our hearts thy sanctuary,
And fill them with thy grace !



LXXVI.

CHRIST'S ANTICIPATIONS OF DEATH.

JOHN XII. 20 – 50.

Now is my soul troubled, and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour? But for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name. — Verses 27, 28.

CHRISTIAN ! when around thy head
Clouds of woe are darkly spread,
When, amidst thy gathering fears,
Useless mortal aid appears,
Humbly as thou kneel'st imploring,
Tearful prayers for mercy pouring,—
Faint not, though the answer fail,
Though thy tears should nought avail ;
Though thy cherished joys be fled,
Still, let faith lift up thy head ;
Ever be thy prayer the same,
“ Father, glorify thy name ! ”

For this cause, perchance, his power
Brings thee to this dreaded hour,
That, through sorrow, thou may'st prove
All the treasures of his love,
And through patience to endure
Make thine own election sure.
Brighter burns the Christian's light,
When around him all is night.
Know, the Merciful surveys thee;
Doubt thou not that he will raise thee.
When the appointed time is past,
He will give thee peace at last.

Plead thou not, thy burthen's weight
For thy strength is made too great.
God his own appointment knoweth,
And the needed aid bestoweth.
In thy suffering, rejoice,
For thou hear'st a Father's voice;
Stern his lessons, but they come
From his love, to guide thee home.
If it be his holy will,
Like thy Saviour, be thou still.
Pray, in danger, death, or shame,
"Father, glorify thy name!"

LXXVII.

POWER OF FAITH.

MARK XI. 12 - 33.

Therefore I say unto you, what things soever ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them. — Verse 24.

O FOR that faith, to which in ancient days
The promise of the Son of God was given ;
That faith, that upward looked with earnest gaze,
And saw the blessings it besought of heaven !

No cloud of doubt or fear could intervene ;
Its sure reliance was the Saviour's word ;
It was the evidence of things not seen,
The substance of things hoped for from the Lord.

How do we need that faith in trial's hour,
When our afflictions seem our strength above !
Then should it teach us that our Maker's power
Is only equalled by our Father's love.

That faith we need, when conscience shrinks to trace
Our past infirmities of deed and will.
Almost despairing then of heavenly grace,
Trembling we ask, if God can pardon still.

Faint not, sad suppliants ! Kneel and humbly pray.
The God who hears will strengthen and forgive.
But turn ye not from Mercy's throne away ;
He that endureth to the end, shall live.

LXXVIII.

REJECTION OF THE JEWS.

MATTHEW XXI. 28-46.

Therefore say I unto you, the kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. — Verse 43.

O TOWERS of Salem, where the Saviour trod,
Where David's harp with inspiration rung,
Where o'er the mercy-seat, the present God
Revealed his glory, while the Levites sung,
And Israel's thousands bowed with one accord,
As the wise king before the shrine adored ;—

Are ye then fallen ? Has the grace divine
Passed from your sacred palaces away ?
The Arab bows where stood Moriah's shrine,
And Judah bends beneath the Moslem's sway.
The glory hath departed. Ne'er again
Shall rise the incense-cloud, the Levite's strain.

And thou, my country, chosen of the Lord,
Land of the pilgrim, land of Washington,
By heaven defended from the invading sword,
Strong in the freedom by thy heroes won!
Oh shall the kingdom of thy God be taken
From thee, because his law thou hast forsaken?

How is the fine gold dimmed! That glorious name
Thou hadst among the nations, how brought low!
For thy once spotless faith, lo! deeds of shame;
For songs of peace and joy, a cry of woe,
From where thy streets are red with civic strife,
Or passion rears the murderous bowie-knife

Too proudly, my country, hast thou stood;
Oh let repentance bring humility.
Fulfil thy pledges, — cleanse the stain of blood, —
Unbind the yoke, and let the oppressed go free.
So shall thy glory like the morn be bright,
For God, our Fathers' God, shall be thy light.

LXXIX.

THE CALL OF GOD.

MATTHEW XXII. 1-22.

Many are called, but few are chosen. — Verse 14.

VOICE of the Lord! On Sinai's height
The tribes of old before thee bowed,
When through dark cloud and flashing light
The trumpet sounded long and loud.
Scarce could thy chosen prophet dare
On that dread mount to fix his eye;
And trembling Israel breathed the prayer,
“ Oh speak not with us, lest we die ! ”

Voice of the Lord! When Jesus spake,
Again thine awful sound was heard.
That word the haughtiest soul could shake
And man's deep heart before it stirred.
The hardened sinner kneeled to God;
The proud oppressor learned to spare;
And, bowed beneath affliction's rod,
The mourner owned a Father's care.

Voice of the Lord ! We hear thee still
 Within the temple's solemn bound,
When thronging guests the banquet fill,
 And peals the organ's lofty sound.
We hear thee when some hoary sire
 Amid his household bends to pray,
Or when our lonely thoughts aspire,
 At opening morn or closing day.

We hear thee when the ocean speaks,
 Responsive to the tempest's roar ;
We hear thee when it gently breaks,
 With murmur sweet, along the shore.
We hear thee, voice of God most high !
 When sorrow pleads for pity's tear ;
And when as sickness veils the eye,
 The darkness of the grave seems near.

Voice of the Lord ! We hear thy call ;
 From heaven, from earth it peals around.
In lonely shade, in crowded hall,
 We list that sweet yet awful sound.
O Father ! Let no thoughtless heart
 The sacred call receive in vain ;
But may we, when from earth we part,
 Thy voice of mercy hear again !

LXXX.

THE GREAT COMMANDMENT.

MATTHEW XXII. 23 - 46.

Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. — Verses 37, 38.

O THOU Eternal Being, who of old,
Before the mountains stood, or thou hadst formed
The earth, or bid the stars to pour their light,
Didst in thy dread immensity pervade
Space without bounds ! In vain the intellect
Of thy weak creature may attempt to know
Thee as thou art. Far back, through age on age,
We mark the wonders of thy viewless hand ;
And ancient as the furthest-reaching thought
Can fix the date of yonder splendid orbs,
The hour has been when they began to shine.
And through the measureless ages, ere that hour,
While thou, O God, wast, as thou art, supreme,
Did other worlds rise, shine and pass away,
Millions of years enduring, yet a speck
In thine infinity ? But ere they rose,
Ere the first motion of thy forming hand,
Through time that ne'er began, what then wast thou,

Sole Life, Sole Essence? Or hast thou, through all,
Without beginning wrought as even now,
Dispensing happiness to worlds on worlds,
And thy creative wonders far receding,
A chain whose first link is not? O my soul,
Strive not to penetrate the vast abyss,
But turn to Him, in deep humility.
Own Him thy God, thy never-failing Friend,
Giver of every blessing, — only source
Of every hope thou yet canst entertain,
Father and Sender of the Prince of Peace,
And, — by that holiest title, taught by Christ, —
Thy Father!

Canst thou render, O my soul!
Aught worthy such a Being? Unto Him
What were thy gifts, though thou should'st sacrifice
Upon his altar countless flocks and herds?
His are the victims of thy gorgeous rite;
His are the cattle on a thousand hills.
The nations are before Him but as dust.
And what, O man! the anthems of thy pride
To Him, before whose throne the countless stars,
Thronged with their million forms of light and power,
His praises hymn forever? What should'st thou
Presume to offer to the King of kings? —
There is a treasure he hath made thine own;
He will not take it, but as thou shalt give;
He seeks it from thee. Haste, oh haste, and bring
To God the tribute of *thy loving heart*.

LXXXI.

HUMILITY AND BROTHERLY LOVE.

MATTHEW XXIII.

One is your Master, even Christ ; and all ye are brethren.—Verse 8.

How sweet the hour, in harmony of faith,
When Christians in the sacred banquet share,
And meditate upon the Saviour's death,
While each rapt spirit seeks its God in prayer.

No jarring thought is there. With one accord
Assembled brethren raise their hearts to heaven.
They feel the presence of their risen Lord,
Their Father's blessing to his children given.

But, shame and woe ! Throughout this ample land
Where shall the Christian find that peaceful scene,
Where all united meet, a happy band,
And the rude voice of strife has never been ?

We cannot kneel before our brethren's shrine ;
Our brother's voice blends not with ours in prayer ;
We cannot share the sacred bread and wine
Remembering him who made us all his care.

Sad is that thought. Yet faith and love shall rise
Triumphant o'er each circumstance of ill ;
And at each altar as we lift our eyes,
The God of peace will bless his children still.

Father ! To Thee ascends each sacred flame ;
Saviour ! In thy blest name our prayers aspire ;
Spirit of God ! Thy promised aid we claim
To fan more brightly every hallowed fire.

God speed ye, brethren, in each separate path !
Where conscience guides, ye cannot go astray.
But let not scorn, nor bitterness, nor wrath
Disturb your progress in the heavenward way.

On yon blest summits be your steadfast gaze ;
To those each path ye tread at length shall tend,
Triumphant love inspire united praise,
And doubt and error shall in rapture end.

LXXXII.

VIRTUOUS POVERTY.

LUKE XXI.

And he saw also a certain poor widow, casting in thither two mites ; and he said, Of a truth I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast in more than they all. — Verses 2, 3.

HAST thou in poverty's low sphere,
Of humble worth observant, trod ?
Then canst thou know, how brightly there
Shines through that gloom the love of God.
While all things gaily beam around,
That holy radiance scarce is seen ;
But O, how glorious is it found,
Where fortune's glare shines not between.

There dwells the childlike heart that knows,
By more than faith, that God is nigh,
Still grateful, when his bounty flows,
Resigned and calm, if he deny ;
With thoughts whose home is not on earth,
A soul ambition never stained ;
Where proud resentment ne'er had birth,
By sordid avarice unprofaned.

More would'st thou learn? Behold the poor
From his own poverty impart.
The claimant at that humble door
Still finds within a gentle heart.
The pittance that is freely given
Shall haply stint their daily meal;
But there's a blessing sent from heaven,
The giver's thankful heart shall feel.

O child of wealth! revere the poor,
Who to themselves and God are true.
Thy Saviour did that lot endure,
And want, and toil, and wandering knew.
Revere them! so shalt thou revere
What in thyself is most divine;
And bearing well thy fortunes here,
Make heaven's eternal riches thine.

LXXXIII.

DUTY OF PREPARATION.

MATTHEW XXV. 1 - 30.

Watch, therefore ; for ye know neither the day nor the hour. —
Verse 13.

O DEATH ! In vain thy victims strive
Thy coming to discern !
Ere the dark mandate shall arrive,
And dust to dust return.
Now, while to life's approaching end
Our thoughts contemplative ascend,
That mandate is not given ;
We turn again to scenes of earth,
Forgetting all save joy and mirth ; —
Then sounds the call of Heaven.

The manly form, the noble mien,
The generous heart and free,
Though late among the proudest seen,
Must yield, stern King ! to thee.
Thus, wont to brave the strife or storm,
A chief with each high feeling warm

The deck familiar trod.
Beauty and mirth were all around,
When in the bursting cannon's sound,
Was heard the call of God.*

They fall, the noblest of the band, —
The chiefs in council tried, —
The chosen guardians of the land, —
Expiring side by side.
And he, the gentle and the brave !
If human love from death could save,
He had not perished there.
Now, o'er that form, in hopeless woe,
The first sad tears of childhood flow,
Rises the widow's prayer.

Oh, when around us life is bright,
When favoring breezes blow,
And over tracks of foaming light
Full gallantly we go,
Then let a thought of that dark scene,
With its deep moral intervene,

* The catastrophe on board the Steam Frigate Princeton, on the 23th of February, 1844, when six persons, including two of the chief officers of Government, were instantaneously deprived of life, was a dispensation of Providence, which seemed suitable to be thus applied to the illustration of religious sentiment. That with such a purpose, I have designated more particularly one of the sufferers, with whom alone I had enjoyed any personal acquaintance, — the lamented Commodore Kennon, — will not, I hope, be regarded as unsuitable to the character of the present work.

That thus we still may be
 Steadfast, O Father ! so to live,
 That when Thou callest we may give
 Calmly our souls to Thee !



LXXXIV.

THE PHILANTHROPIST.

MATTHEW XXV. 31-46.

I was in prison, and ye came unto me. — Verse 36.

Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of
 the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.—Verse 40.

O ROCK-BOUND Isle of Albion !
 A lofty fame is thine,
 And o'er the world the glory beams
 Of the old Saxon line ;
 Won through successive ages
 By deeds on land and main,
 By calm-reflecting sages,
 And bards of magic strain.

But not a name, O Britain !
 Is thine of loftier worth
 Than his who from his pleasant home
 At mercy's call went forth,

Lured by no hopes of glory,
Ambition's path to tread,
Yet lives his name in story,
The noblest of thy dead.

Through many a blooming region
The traveller held his way ;
But not for all their loveliness
Did he his course delay.
From gay Parisian pleasures,
Italian art and grace,
He turned to find his treasures
In misery's dwelling place.

The dungeon of the felon,
By all mankind abhorred,
Drew to its vaults of wretchedness
The servant of the Lord.
He passed o'er land and ocean
In suffering's fearful quest,
While every kind emotion
Burned in his dauntless breast.

Where raged the fatal fever,
In the dismal quarantine,
He, in the cause of God and man,
Unveiled the fearful scene ;
The mortal danger braving
Of each polluted cell,
From woe the prisoner saving,
He triumphed though he fell.

O God, who to his spirit
Didst give that lofty will,
Through pain, and toil, and banishment,
His mission to fulfil, —
Like Him, supreme in kindness,
Who came on earth to save,
To lighten human blindness,
To ransom from the grave! —

Grant, Lord, to us thy children
A soul of zeal and faith,
With holy love's prevailing power,
To labor unto death;
To soften human sorrow,
To calm the trembler's fear,
And point a holier morrow
In thy celestial sphere.

LXXXV.

JESUS ANOINTED AT BETHANY.

MATTHEW XXVI. 1 - 19.

To what purpose is this waste ? — Verse 8.

“ WHY pour that precious perfume forth
Upon Messiah’s head !
What is to him the fragrance worth,
In such profusion shed ?
Is he to luxury resigned,
That costly gift to need ;
Or can his pure and lofty mind
The toys of grandeur heed ? ”

So reasoned, with contracted thought,
The followers of the Lord ;
But he, with holier wisdom fraught,
Reproved their censuring word.
Did gratitude the gift impart,
That gratitude he blest,
And loved the generous, feeling heart,
That sought to bring its best.*

* “ For Love delights to bring her best,
And where Love is, the offering evermore is blest.”

Can we to Christ no tribute bring,
The cross for us who bore ;
Nor hail with humble offering
The God whom we adore ?
That offering he will not disdain,
If with true spirit given ;
Nor is the grateful thought in vain,
That the heart prompts for Heaven.

LXXXVI.

JESUS WASHES THE DISCIPLES' FEET.

JOHN XIII.

Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God, he riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments, and took a towel and girded himself; after that he poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded. — Verses 3, 4, 5.

IN the hour of meditation,
When beneath the temple's shade,
Emblems of the great salvation
On the altar are displayed ; —

Ere the pastor's voice hath spoken
Of the ordinance divine,
Ere the hallowed bread is broken,
Poured the sacramental wine ; —

While the reverent crowd retiring
Leave the solemn chancel free,
Then my soul from earth aspiring,
Saviour ! rises unto thee !

Then the scenes of distant ages
Are to Fancy's vision brought,

As, of old, inspired sages
To the listening churches taught.

Lo, around their Lord reclining,
The disciples' band appear,
Not a heart but his divining
Trial, scourge, and cross so near.

Yes! he knows his hour of sorrow;
But the love that conquers death
Must, before that fatal morrow,
One last blessed gift bequeath.

Rising from his honored station,
Beaming with his Father's grace,
Author of the world's salvation,
Lo! he takes a menial's place.

Then with words of warm affection
Doth he teach his chosen flock,
Comforts now their deep dejection,
Leads them to the Living Rock.

Holy Teacher! in our weakness,
When temptation's hosts assail,
May the memory of thy meekness
O'er our spirit's foes prevail!

May our love be pure and fervent,
Like the love that filled thy breast,
Who didst stoop to be a servant,
That thy people might be blest.

LXXXVII.

INSTITUTION OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.

LUKE XXII. 15-38.

This do in remembrance of me. — Verse 19.

“TAKE, and eat,” the Saviour said,
As he gave the hallowed bread.

“This be your perpetual token
Of my body, torn and broken.

“As I pour this ruby wine,
Must be poured this blood of mine.
By that purple gushing tide
Shall the world be purified.

“Ye whom I so long have loved,
In my trials faithful proved,
Thus when I have left your sight,
Keep my memory ever bright.”

Time passed on. The Saviour's death
Sealed the triumph of his faith;
And the chosen of the Lord
Treasured well his parting word.

To their souls that feast was dear ;
His mild voice they seemed to hear ;
As they shared the bread and wine,
Still they saw his form divine.

Many a century hath fled
Since they slumbered with the dead ;
But as we thy word fulfil,
Jesus ! we behold thee still.

Still in sacramental sign
As we pour the hallowed wine,
Our enraptured spirits gaze
On that scene of ancient days.

Lo ! once more the board is crowned ;
The disciples gather round ;
See ! their hearts are sunk in woe ;
Hark ! what words from Jesus flow !

Often may our hearts unite
In this blest communion-rite,
Pledge of Christian love and faith,
Emblem of the Saviour's death.

LXXXVIII.

CHRIST STILL PRESENT.

JOHN XIV.

I will not leave you comfortless ; I will come to you. — Verse 18.

WHEN amid his sad disciples
Sat the Saviour, pale and calm,
Seeking, with a brother's kindness
Words that might their grief disarm ;

“ Lo, I leave you not forever,”
Thus the blessed Teacher said,
“ I will come to you hereafter,
Though I mingle with the dead.”

Waned the night ; the early morning
Saw him bound, condemned to die ;
And his people in their sorrow
Scarce dared cast a glance on high.

Soon from death's cold slumber waking
Christ fulfilled his parting word ;
Then was mourning changed to gladness,
When they saw their risen Lord.

Brief that meeting ! Wings of angels
Bore him to his heavenly throne ;
And his followers must travel
Henceforth through the world alone.

Not alone ! He still is with us ;
Still by faith we see him near ;
In the hour of sad foreboding,
Soft he whispers, " Do not fear."

When temptation lures to ruin,
He who broke the tempter's power,
Still is near his faithful servants,
Guiding through the dangerous hour.

When our flesh and heart are failing,
When the gloom of death we see,
Conqueror o'er the king of terrors !
Saviour ! may we rest on thee !

LXXXIX.

CHRIST'S LOVE, OUR EXAMPLE.

JOHN XV.

This is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you. — Verse 12.

SPIRIT of love, that shrined in Jesus shone,
As shone God's presence o'er the hallowed ark,
Thou glorifiest all thou beamest on,
Robing in beauty what was cold and dark;
And as from one bright fire full many a spark
Floats on the air, and kindling where it falls,
New light and warmth from all around it calls,
While awe-struck crowds its course resistless mark,
So, thou, supreme in loveliness and might,
By Jesus brought on earth, from heart to heart
Rapidly passing, fillest all with light
And warmth, and holiness; nor dost depart,
But rising with undying flame above,
Point to the throne of Him whose holiest name is Love.

XC.

PROMISE OF THE COMFORTER.

JOHN XVI.

If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you. — Verse 7.

SPIRIT of Comfort ! spirit of our God !

Not while his followers gazed on Jesus' face,
Not while the Saviour in their circle trod,

Could they enjoy the breathings of thy grace.
We cannot walk at once by faith and sight ;
Nor view the tranquil stars, while all around is bright.

Be welcome then the discipline of Heaven !

Father ! if at thy will our comforts die,
To thee be praises in affliction given,

And let faith lift her humble, hopeful eye,
Shed down thy blessed influence on the soul,
And in thy mercy make our spirits whole.

Too bright, Prosperity, at times thy ray !

Its enervating influence, Lord, remove !
But let the clouds, that dim our earthly day,

Be guided still by thy unchanging love ;
And whether dark or bright the scene appear,
Still, heavenly Guardian, may we feel thee near !

But ah ! our timid hearts recall the prayer !

The gifts thou hast bestowed we fear to lose.
Those precious gifts, O God of mercy, spare !

But grant us grace each blessing so to use,
That all that fills these earthly scenes with light,
May fit our spirits for thy mansions bright.



XCI.

CHRIST PRAYS FOR HIS DISCIPLES.

JOHN XVII.

Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word, that they all may be one. — Verses 20, 21.

WAS it in vain that Jesus prayed
For those he came to save,
When darkly o'er his path was laid
The shadow of the grave ?

Where is the union that he sought ?
Look through the world he blest ;
Where wilt thou find the hallowed spot
Where, dove-like, peace may rest ?

While Christian nations join in strife,
While angry sects engage,
While earth with every crime is rife
Of lust, and fraud, and rage, —

Hath Jesus loved and prayed in vain ?
O doubting heart, be still !
Yet holds thy Lord his glorious reign,
Despite of wrong and ill.

Though nations in their battle cries
Profane the Almighty's name ;
Though bigots, to the offended skies,
Their own wild wrath proclaim ;

From where the din of conflict swells,
Go, seek the quiet scene,
Where unobtrusive goodness dwells
With gratitude serene ;

Where poverty its daily prayer
Of sweet contentment pours ;
Where wealth relieves, with generous care,
The sorrows it deplores.

Thousands, through every Christian land,
Have never bowed the knee
In worship to the idol-band
Of strife and perfidy.

And these are one ; — though some may bend
Before the Virgin's shrine,
While others' prayers and thanks ascend
Father ! alone at thine ;

Yet they are one ; if through their hearts
The soul of love be poured,
As swells some strain of various parts,
Yet all in sweet accord.

Still, on his church, of every name,
Its glorious Lord looks down,
And each disciple's reverent claim
Regards without a frown.

And still the lowly and the pure
Are one with him and thee,
Thou who, through Jesus, didst secure
Man's immortality !

XCII.

PRAYER IN THE GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE.

MATTHEW XXVI. 30-56.

O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me ; nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt. — Verse 39.

HEAR what Christ the Saviour said,
When his soul, oppressed with dread,
Sought his Father's aid.
Cold drops on his forehead stood,
Thick, like drops of clotted blood,
While the sufferer prayed.

“O my God, the hour is nigh !
I must yield myself to die,
On the cross of shame.
Bitter scourge and cruel steel
Soon thy chosen one must feel
In his mangled frame.

“How shall nature's feeble power
Calmly meet that awful hour ?
How, amid my woes,
Not a cry of pain be heard,
Not a harsh impatient word
To my scornful foes ?

“ Should I fail, — should aught be done
 Lord! unworthy of thy Son,
 Wrung by bitter pain!
 Then from age to age the shame
 On Messiah's cause and name
 Ever would remain.

“ Father! humbly I lay down
 Here the mediatorial crown,
 If it be thy will.
 But if thou the task require,
 In the strength thou shalt inspire,
 I will bear it still.

“ Yes! my Father, thou art near!
 For thine angel, sent to cheer,
 Hails me still thy Son.
 Now the fear of scorn and pain
 Threat my steadfast soul in vain.
 Lord, thy will be done!”

XCIII.

PETER'S DENIAL OF CHRIST.

LUKE XXII. 54-71.

And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter ; and Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice ; And Peter went out, and wept bitterly. — Verses 61, 62.

WEEP not for those in Christ who sleep,
Within the cold grave's dreamless bed ;
Their rest is calm, and angels keep
Watch o'er each heaven-beloved head.
Their strife is closed, their crown is won,
To realms of bliss their spirits soar,
And, near their heavenly Father's throne,
Live in his smile, to die no more.

But weep for those, who here below,
Through trial's stormy ocean steer ;
Who mid the mountain billows go,
By hope misled, or driven by fear ;
And oh, for him in danger's hour,
Whose heart hath sunk, whose faith is dim,
Who falls before the tempter's power,
Weep, child of frailty, weep for him.

O champion of the cause divine !
Rock of the church, by Jesus blest !
What heart and hand more prompt than thine
To execute thy Lord's behest ?
And hast thou fallen ? Who then shall stand,
In trials dark and stormy hour ?
The noblest of that sacred band,
The victim of temptation's power !

O not our strength alone can save.
To thee, Most Merciful ! we turn.
Not rashly may we danger brave,
But every fearful trait discern.
Then fully armed in virtue's might,
Our strength, our confidence in thee,
Grant us, O God, to dare the fight,
And give thy servants victory !

Yet may repentance raise her head ;
The God of mercy heareth prayer.
The tears the fallen disciple shed
Were due to grief, but not despair.
By Jesus' glance to faith new-born,
The path of holiness he trod,
Sustained the cross through heathen scorn,
And rose, through martyrdom, to God.

XCIV.

JESUS BEFORE PILATE.

JOHN XVIII. 28, to XIX. 17.

My kingdom is not of this world. — xviii. 36.

Thou couldst have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above. — xix. 11.

IN Pilate's hall, by scornful Pharisees
Surrounded, and by dark-browed Roman bands,
Before the procurator's footstool stands
The Son of God, the glorious Prince of Peace.
Alone he stands ; his followers all have fled ;
In mockery o'er his limbs a robe is thrown
Of regal purple, and a thorny crown
Appears in scorn upon his sacred head.
Calmly he speaks ; " From God thy power proceeds ;
Without his will thou canst not harm a hair
Upon my brow ; then patient will I bear
The unrighteous punishment of holy deeds.
I am a king, but not with mortal state."
He said, and meekly died, the greatest of the great.

And oh, what majesty of power and love
Beamed o'er his sacred features, as he stood
Calmly, amid the foes who sought his blood,
His eyes upturning to his home above !

The haughty judge views with admiring gaze,
And speaks him guiltless ; but the bigot crowd
Demand their victim's death, with clamors loud,
As their malignant scribes their passions raise.
Follower of Jesus ! learn like him to bear
Unmoved, the fury of the blinded throng.
The waves may foam around, but be thou strong
And loving ! 'T is thy hallowed lot to share
Thy Master's sufferings ; thou shalt share his rest.
Learn thou like him to live, and in thy death be blest.

XCV.

THE CRUCIFIXION.

LUKE XXIII. 26-49.

Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them ; for they know not what they do. — Verse 34.

IN the Saviour's hour of death,
Bound upon the cross of fear,
While his quick and struggling breath
Spoke the fatal moment near, —
While his proud, triumphant foes
Mocked the sufferings that he bore,
Then his loving spirit rose
More sublime than e'er before.

He has taught us to forgive,
By his words in days gone by ;
He has taught us how to live ;
Can he teach us how to die ?
Listen ! as the cross they raise,
One brief prayer ascends to heaven ;
For his murderers he prays ;
“ Father, may they be forgiven ! ”

Then his glance a felon turned,
Suffering at the sufferer's side,
And the grace that others spurned
Sought, nor was that grace denied.
Lo ! there beams a heavenly smile
On the Saviour's pallid face,
As his anguish for a while
Gives to love and pity place.

But another, dearer claim
Touched that heart that beat so warm,
In a mother's holiest name
For that worn and fainting form.
Mary, once of angels blest !
Was that voice of anguish thine ?
Lo ! his eyes upon thee rest ;
Hear his words of love divine !

Blessed Lord ! Thy claim we own.
Not in triumph's loftiest hour,
When the blind thy might made known,
When the grave confessed thy power,
Do we feel our hearts subdued
As when thus we look to thee,
Mid the scoffing multitude,
Dying on the accursed tree !

XCVI.

"IT IS FINISHED."

JOHN XIX. 17-42.

He said, It is finished ; and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost. — Verse 30.

"It is finished !" Glorious word,
From thy lips, our suffering Lord !
Word of high triumphant might,
Ere thy spirit takes its flight.
It is finished ! All is o'er ;
Pain and scorn oppress no more.
Now no more, foreboding dread
Shades the path thy feet must tread ;
No more fear lest in thine hour
Pain should patience overpower.
On the perfect sacrifice
Not a stain of weakness lies ;
All hath righteously been done,
And the world's salvation won.
Champion, lay thine armor by ;
'T is thine hour of victory !
All thy toils are now o'erpast ;
Thou hast found thy rest at last.

Earthly wrongs no more shall grieve thee;
 Heaven is opening to receive thee.
 There the Everlasting One
 Owns and crowns his holy Son.
 Lift your heads, ye heavenly gates!
 For his crown the conqueror waits.
 Welcome in the King of glory,
 Hero of earth's loftiest story,
 Him who death and hell o'ercame,
 Heir of more than human fame!

Nor before thine eyes alone
 Rose the vision of that throne
 Where the viewless presence hovers,
 As the cloud the altar covers.
 Far away through time's expanse
 Burst on thine enraptured glance
 Visions of a world renewed
 Through the offering of thy blood.
 Thousands to whose failing eyes
 Thine example's light should rise,
 Giving in affliction's hour
 Part in thy celestial power;
 Millions of each different clime,
 Through that sacrifice sublime
 Brought to walk in holiness,
 And their Father's love to bless;
 These appear before thy sight
 In a flood of heaven's own light.
 Did the scenes thy heart engage
 Of the blest millennial age,

When through all the ransomed world
War's red banner shall be furled,
When the slave shall pine no more,
Nor the dungeon's iron door
Close upon a human form,
But the heart, with virtue warm,
Everywhere its tribute raise
In one song of boundless praise;
While the love thy life hath taught,
The salvation thou hast wrought,
On the wide and glorious earth
Shall bestow its second birth?

But before that vision's close,
Yet another scene arose,
All to whom thy death should be
Means of immortality,
Millions countless as the sand
Strewn on Joppa's sea-beat strand,
Each an heir of endless life
Through thy conquest in the strife,
Hymn their songs of praise to thee.
— Glorious spirit! Thou art free!
Thou hast bowed thy kingly head;
Earth's one stainless soul is fled.

XCVII.

THE RESURRECTION.

MATTHEW XXVIII.

The angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it. — Verse 2.

AND thou art laid to rest
Within earth's gloomy breast,
Revealer to the earth of truth divine!
Not by thy words alone
Making thy Father known,
But his pure spirit beaming forth in thine.

Now thine exulting foes
Around thy deep repose
Arrange their guards, and seal the massive stone.
Vain is their prudence here;
It but reveals more clear
The awakening glory of God's holy Son.

With noon-tide lustre bright,
Breaking the gloom of night,
Descends a messenger from higher spheres;
The keepers shake with dread,
While he, so lately dead,
Forth from the tomb in majesty appears.

Saviour ! what thoughts were thine,
When at that call divine
Beamed on thine eyes the angelic radiance first ?
Can mortal fancy dare
To image forth the prayer
Of thankfulness and joy that from thee burst ?

“Glory to thee, my God !
Now is the pathway trod
Through pain and death ; the fearful strife is won.
Now, the dark stream passed o’er,
Upon the peaceful shore
I rest, the task of earth’s redemption done.”

O venturous fancy, cease !
Can words describe the peace,
The holy rapture of the victor’s heart ?
Not that the joys of heaven—
At once to him were given ;
Not yet his hour had come from earth to part.

But to his loving breast,
To know that man was blest,
That the great sacrifice was now complete, —
This was a loftier prize
Than when the opening skies
Revealed the glories of his heavenly seat.

Saviour ! when on our sight
Bursts that mysterious light,
Now darkly hidden by the veil of death,

O may such holy joy
Our spirits' powers employ,
As love divine fulfils the word of faith.



XCVIII.

JESUS APPEARS TO HIS DISCIPLES.

LUKE XXIV. 13 - 35.

Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures? — Verse 32.

HATH not thy heart within thee burned
At evening's calm and holy hour,
As if its inmost depths discerned
The presence of a loftier power?

Hast thou not heard, mid forest glades,
While ancient rivers murmured by,
A voice from forth the eternal shades,
That spake a present Deity?

And as upon the sacred page,
Thine eye in rapt attention turned
O'er records of a holier age,
Hath not thy heart within thee burned?

It was the voice of God, that spake
In silence to thy silent heart,
And bade each worthier thought awake,
And every dream of earth depart.

As they who once with Jesus trod,
With kindling breast his accents heard,
But knew not that the Son of God
Was uttering every burning word;—

Father of Jesus! thus thy voice
Speaks to our hearts in tones divine;
Our spirits tremble and rejoice,
But know not that the voice is thine.

Still be thy hallowed accents near!
To doubt and passion whisper peace;
Direct us on our journey here,
Then bid, in heaven, our wanderings cease.

XCIX.

CHRIST'S CHARGE TO PETER.

JOHN XXI.

He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved, because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep. — Verse 17.

WHEN the gracious Benefactor
In the hall of judgment stood,
Not an eye of pity near him,
Mid the foes who sought his blood, —
When a deeper pang was given
To his torn and bleeding breast,
As he heard that dark denial
From a friend his love had blessed, —

Was his sin without its guerdon,
Who denied his Master's name?
No; one look of speechless feeling
Filled his heart with grief and shame.
But when Jesus, slain and risen,
Stood by Galilee's calm sea,
Simple words, but gently serious,
Spake his pardon, "Lovest thou me?"

O when we, our wrongs resenting,
In vindictive strife engage,
Let us, Lord, by thee instructed,
Learn to check unhallowed rage.
Let us conquer sin with kindness,
Let us vanquish hate with love;
Each to each that mercy showing
Which we seek from God above.

Thus, O Father! art thou dealing
With thy children day by day,
Bounties plenteously dispensing
Even o'er the offender's way.
We have sinned; — we ask forgiveness; —
Father, lo! we kneel to thee.
Thou, O Lord! in mercy hearest,
Only asking, Love ye me?

Love we thee, All-gracious Father?
Love we thee, our Saviour Lord?
O might all our life's devotion
Fitting proof of love afford.
And a proof 't is ours to render;
"If ye love me, feed my sheep."
May we strive, O blessed Master,
Faithfully thy charge to keep!

"Feed my sheep;" — where sorrow presses,
Willing meet its lowly claim.
"Feed my sheep;" — on human blindness
Shed the light, through Christ that came.

“Feed my lambs;” — to Jesus’ presence
Let the young and pure be led;
Let their yet unsullied spirits
Banquet on the living bread.

As of old thy great apostle,
By a life of toil and faith,
Showed his ardent soul’s devotion,
Till he met a martyr’s death;
So may we, exalted Saviour!
Strive to feed thy flock in love,
Till the hour shall come to gather
Us too to thy flock above.

C.

THE ASCENSION.

LUKE XXIV. 36 - 53.

And it came to pass while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven. — Verse 51.

O RADIANT angel-choir !
When the great Conqueror came,
How rung each consecrated lyre
To hail his car of flame !
Up through the arch of blue
That crowned the olive grove,
On wheels of victory he flew,
To reach his throne above.

Enter thy kingdom, Lord !
The eternal gates unfold,
And praise from earth and heaven is poured
As once in days of old,
When the first anthem rung
From mount, and vale, and plain,
And when the stars of morning sung
Their high harmonious strain.

Praise to Messiah's name,
The conqueror of the grave!
His hallowed praise let all proclaim,
Who peace and freedom gave.
Praise him, ye chosen band,
Who watch his path of light;
And ye, who near the Almighty stand,
In changeless glory bright!

Ye prophets, who of old,
By solemn vision taught,
The coming blessedness foretold,
Now by the Saviour brought;
Ye holy dead, who prayed
To see his glorious day,
Now be your vows of rapture paid,
Raise your exulting lay!

Praise, Judah, praise thy king!
To thee the holy came.
Yet shall thy voice his goodness sing;
Thy faith shall own his name.
Yet shalt thou bless that cross
Thine own rejection gave,
And own all other wealth but dross
For him who died to save.

Ye Gentiles, lift your voice!
In darkness long ye lay;
Now in the light of truth rejoice,
And praise to Jesus pay.

Ye islands of the seas !
Ye nations of the West !
Swell forth your songs on every breeze,
To speak your Saviour blest !

Thou heaven, in rapturous shout,
The jubilee prolong !
Ye chiming spheres, again ring out
The universal song !
Ye angels, who rejoice
Above one rescued soul,
Now from each glowing seraph's voice
Let strains of triumph roll !

And Thou, Supreme o'er all,
Eternal and alone,
Who lookest on this earthly ball
From thine unchanging throne !
By thine almighty hand
The crown of love is given ;
Christ in thy glory takes his stand,
Obeyed in earth and heaven.

CONCLUSION.

'Tis o'er ; the harp of Judah trembles still,
Waked by the touch of my adventurous hand.
Its solemn tones within my bosom thrill
Like music wafted from the spirit-land.
Now as they fainter breathe, abashed I stand,
Lest my rash zeal have wronged that harp sublime,
Whose chords are hallowed by the glorious band
Of prophets and of bards from earliest time.
To mix uncalled with these, were scarcely less than
crime.

But I have listened to yon Vesper strain *
Till my own heart was kindled into praise ;
And caught, as from some dim ancestral fane,
The organ-tones of Keble's solemn lays ; †
And felt a holy power my spirit raise
In the rich music of Life's glorious Psalm : ‡
And many a prophet-voice of former days
Blended its awful strains, intense but calm,
Of power to conquer pain, and death itself disarm.

* Bowring's " Matins and Vespers. "

† Keble's " Christian Year. "

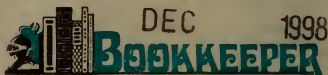
‡ Longfellow's " Voices of the Night. "

What wonder then, that I have dared to breathe
A fainter echo of those hallowed tones ;
A wild-flower chaplet for that shrine to wreath
So rich with orient gold and precious stones ?
Not mine the praise, like those exalted ones,
To thrill with words of fire the raptured age ;
Yet if thy grace, O Lord ! the tribute owns,
A blessing may attend this humble page.
Without thee, vain the toil of patriot, bard, or sage.





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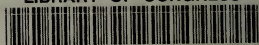
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